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CHRISTIAN MONASTICISM

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CHRISTIAN MONASTICISM

A Great Force in History

BY

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OBERLIN COLLEGE

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DEDICATED
TO MY COLLEAGUES
THE FACULTY
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A MARK OF
AFFECTION AND ESTEEM

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PREFACE

It is my experience as a teacher of history that there is no subject on which the ordinary student, even though perhaps tolerably well read upon the Middle Ages, is more vague in his mind than upon the place of Christian monasticism in the story of the world. That is the theme with which I have tried to deal, and though many excellent things have been written about monks I am not aware of the existence of any book which deals with their earnest labours for mankind from just this point of view. The subject is, of course, dealt with to some extent in very many works.

The twin pillars of mediæval civilization were the tradition of Rome and Christian monasticism (rather than the Christian faith as such), and each had a great contribution to make. "The Holy Roman Empire," by the late Lord Bryce, will ever remain a classic concerning the former. With the work of that most eminent scholar it would indeed be the very height of presumption that I should compare my own.

Nevertheless, I have attempted to set forth the main outlines of the second pillar of mediævalism—those tasks so well achieved by the monks whose original traditions might have appeared so exceedingly unpromising.

I have sought to keep in mind the needs of all students, not merely those specializing in ecclesiastical history. This book has been my chief occupation for about eight years past, during the rather scanty leisure of a college professor. No one can be more conscious of its faults than myself. I have supplied a mere introduction. The theme is such as would justify a really great work.

If, however, these few pages shall stir up some scholar to treat a vast historical field with the fulness of a Gibbon or a Hodgkin my work will not have been altogether in vain.

I confess myself a great admirer of all that is best in the monasticism of the Christian Church. I trust that no word I have written will grate upon the feelings of any reader, whatever his convictions or his faith.

I. C. H.

Oberlin College,
Easter, 1924.

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INTRODUCTION

That ascetics who had left the world in blank despair, voting it so vile as to be past all hope of mending, should in their lonely cloisters, amid desert or forest, have evolved an efficiency that was not known outside, was far indeed from being logical. But so it was. Monks were compelled to take the leading part in raising up again that culture of the West that ceased to be when from the nerveless hand of Rome the rod of empire fell.

It was not logical, nor even likely, but so it came to pass that those who had abandoned their fellows to gain a foretaste of the world beyond, were called by an impulse that was irresistible to take a leading part in the affairs of the very world that they had scorned. Perhaps, indeed, they bore the greatest share of all in the rebuilding of European civilization after barbarian hordes from North and East had tramped it in the dust. At the very least, the magnificent culture of the Middle Ages would without monastic inspiration have been so much impoverished as to become a totally different, a far inferior thing.

Here lies the gripping interest and the extraordinary inspiration in the study of monastic story. It is hardly too much to say that in these unhappy times our stricken world is waiting for some such compelling force as, in those days long past, devoted monks gave to Europe in despair when the glory that had once been Rome lay, ruined cities, blood-soaked plains, at the feet of miscreant barbarian hordes.

Organized asceticism cannot be claimed as a distinctively Christian institution. Its origins must unquestionably be sought beyond the confines of Christianity and even of

Judaism, whose ideals were most unmonastic in every respect. Centuries before Christ came, monks were flourishing in countries much farther to the east than the parts of Asia that He knew.

There would appear to be good grounds for claiming as the original home of the monk either India or some closely bordering land.[1] That part of Asia through all the ages has been most interested in problems of religion, to the exclusion of political development. All the faiths that were cradled on Indian soil have very strongly, though in varying degrees, emphasized ascetic ideals, a thing not true of lands to the east or the west. Asceticism seems to be of the essence of all truly Hindu religious conceptions, in spite of the fact that the Brahman priesthood has ever formed a married caste.

In the two other great centres of primæval Oriental thought—Egypt, with Mesopotamia and the Far East—nothing quite analogous was known. For in Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon, intensely religious though they were, no severe mortifications, nor even celibacy, appear to have been required from the powerful priesthoods, while in China and Japan there was virtually no hierarchy at all till the yellow-robed Buddhists from India arrived.

These were the first to make monasticism a real force in the history of the world, and the monks and nuns were instituted by Buddha himself. The ideal was already venerable in his time; it had been enriched and developed by the legacy of perhaps twenty centuries of Indian thought. China's ancient culture was modified by the influence of Buddhist monasticism, which in Japan virtually founded civilization, much as the Christian monks introduced orderly life over wide areas of northern Europe. Beyond the mountains that wall India still exists by far the largest of all

[1] See Flinders Petrie, *Personal Religion in Egypt before Christianity*, p. 57.

monastic political states (p. 189) where the wide highlands of Tibet are governed by Lama monks—the most powerful hierarchy that Buddhism ever knew. In some respects there is a very remarkable similarity between the secular careers of Buddhist monks in Eastern Asia and of Christian ones in Western Europe.

Christ lived among men and took part in the social functions of His time. Women were among His friends. He instituted no monastic order. He impressed on His disciples nothing of the kind. Three centuries had passed away before any of His adherents were anchorites or monks. And yet, at least followed in one direction, monasticism may fitly be called the climax and the crown of His ideals.

Alone among all the great religious teachers of the world, He never was married. He was heralded by the Baptist hermit. He spent much of His time in lonely contemplation among the deserts. He declared that the man that did not hate his father and his mother could not be His disciple; He told a rich young man who wished to be perfect that he might go, sell everything he had and give to the poor. His teachings are full of exhortations that are admirably appropriate to monks and yet in some cases very hard sayings to those who live in the world.

It was hearing some of these read as the Gospel for the day that caused S. Antony to embrace his severely ascetic life.[2] And yet it is not unlikely that He knew nothing during His earthly sojournings of any professed ascetics. The Jewish Essene monks at Engaddi were not by any means prominent in Palestine, at least so far as we know. As a general rule Jewish religious enthusiasm, prominently represented in Pharisaism, took very different forms.

To the Oriental view that matter is an evil thing in itself and that our vile bodies need to be subdued by asceticism,

[2] *Life*, by S. Athanasius; 2. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, vol. iv, p. 196.

the first origins of monasticism must unquestionably be referred. Such ideas, in a most exaggerated form indeed, were introduced into Christianity by Gnosticism, but it was not from such that came the inspiration of Christian monasticism. So great a movement was not stained by heresy at its birth, though in its early days it did unquestionably represent an acute reaction against the sacramental system of the Church.

S. Paul, the hermit, and S. Antony, serving God in the farthest recesses of the wilderness, found little need for the ministrations of the priests, and must for years together have gone without receiving the Holy Communion. On one occasion it required a special miracle to let S. Benedict know when it was Easter Day.[3]

Long before Christianity had adopted monasticism in any formal way, the Church had been to some extent permeated by its spirit. S. Paul himself declares that he that giveth his daughter in marriage doeth well, but he that abstaineth doeth better. The "Shepherd of Hermas" is full of the praises of virginity. Origen tells us that "certain among them, from a desire of exceeding chastity * * * wish to worship God with greater purity and abstain even from the permitted indulgences of lawful love." [4] Tertullian, though married himself, speaks in many places of the superior sanctity of virginity.

Most of the Fathers, both East and West, may somewhere or other be quoted to justify Dr. Hatch's generalization that, in the early Church, "To marry was indeed not a sin, but it was a confession of weakness: to marry a second time was almost to lapse from grace." [5]

The earliest home of Christian monasticism was almost certainly Egypt, which by the very forbidding nature of its

[3] Gregory, *Dialogues*, bk. II, c. 1.
[4] *Against Celsus*, bk. I, ch. xxvi.
[5] *Organisation of the Early Christian Churches*, Bampton Lectures, 1880, p. 43.

scenery appears at all times to have turned the minds of its inhabitants to thought of the other world. There were other monks than the Christian ones, the Therapeutæ of Philo in earlier, and the Moslem dervishes in later times. Unlike some Oriental religions, and notably Buddhism, Christianity cannot at any time be said to have depended for existence upon monastic organization.

In the Western Church to this day monastic and secular clergy exist side by side, either being qualified to hold any administrative office. In the East, while the higher offices are unfortunately reserved for monks, the main work of the parishes is performed by a married clergy. But for something like a thousand years, from the sixth century to the sixteenth, monasticism was in varying degrees and in different forms the dominating influence in Western Europe in the affairs both of Church and State.

In studying its long and wonderful career, four great periods seem clearly to stand out. They are very unequal in length, but each is characterized by a new and different scope for the energy of the religious.[6]

The *first* extends from the Oriental beginnings till the days when in the sixth century the great S. Benedict gave monasticism, unconsciously enough, something of the organizing power of the West: this period is dominated by SS. Antony, Pachomius, and Basil the Great (Chh. i, ii).

The *second* embraces the long centuries during which the Benedictine monk was laying firmly down the foundations of the splendid culture of the Middle Ages and the days when rather numerous reform movements were giving birth to the daughter orders: this period is dominated in turn by the early Benedictines, the Cluniacs, and the Cistercians (Chh. iii-ix).

[6] This word is convenient as denoting all "regular" clergy; that is, those who live by rule beyond the ordinary ordination vows, whether monks, friars, canons, or clerks.

The *third* is the era of the friars when S. Francis of Assisi and S. Dominic (by no means for the first time) were seeking to find a definite work for ascetics to accomplish. This movement began in the early part of the thirteenth century, the climax of mediæval culture (Ch. x).

During the *fourth* period the Church of Rome was making the most energetic efforts by means of her new orders—especially the Jesuits—to repair the losses that the Reformation caused (Ch. xvii).

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The main facts about each phase of monasticism are to be found in numerous articles of the *Encyclopædia Britannica,* and in larger detail in the *Catholic Encyclopædia.*

General works on the subject are Herbert Workman's *Evolution of the Monastic Ideal,* and O. Hardman's *The Ideals of Asceticism.* Both these are excellent; the former is especially to be commended for its copious references to the sources; the latter is very comprehensive and carries the story far beyond the limits of Christianity. A very small book is Prof. Wishart's (Chicago) *Monks and Monasteries.*

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CHAPTER I

THE DESERT MONKS OF EGYPT

The first of Christian monks was named S. Paul. His life has been written, not very critically, by S. Jerome. From the Decian persecution he fled to the remotest recesses of the desert and a man learned in all the wisdom of Egypt and of Greece, wealthy and cultured, was content for long years to dwell alone in a cave where a secret mint had existed in the days of Cleopatra and Antony.

The blessed Paul had lived the life of heaven on earth for a hundred and thirteen years when he was visited by S. Antony, another monk who was destined to a larger share of fame. S. Antony was directed to the spot by friendly beasts of rather fearsome shape, the first a hippo-centaur, half man, half horse. "This monster, after gnashing out some kind of outlandish utterance, in words broken rather than spoken through his bristling lips, at length finds a friendly mode of communication, and extending his right hand points out the way desired. Then with swift flight he crosses the spreading plain and vanishes from the sight of his wondering companion." [1]

[1] S. Jerome, *Life of Paulus the first hermit, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, p. 300. In the *Lausiac History of Palladius*, bk. II, ch. ii (vol. i, p. 197, seq. *Paradise of the Holy Fathers*, translated from the Syriac by Wallis Budge.) this beast gives no help and in fact turns out to be the devil. The Syriac version gives Jerome's story in a slightly different form.

S. Antony was amazed, for in all his ninety years he had seen nothing of the sort and as he passed along he pondered what he had witnessed. Another still more wonderful beast turned out to be a mortal man misled by the false faith of the Gentiles.

The third was a she-wolf who pointed out the very cave. S. Antony entered "with halting step and bated breath, carefully feeling his way. * * * At length through the fearful midnight darkness a light appeared in the distance. In his eager haste he struck his foot against a stone and roused the echoes, whereupon the blessed Paul closed the open door and made it fast with a bar." S. Antony, however, persisted. If S. Paul would receive wild beasts why not a man?

At length he was admitted, and the two old monks exchanged the kiss of peace. S. Paul asked for the latest news: "How fares the human race? Are new homes springing up in the ancient cities? What government directs the world? Are there still some remaining for the demons to carry away by their delusions?" At supper time a raven brought them food, twice the usual ration it was wont to bear to S. Paul alone. For sixty years he had thus been fed.

S. Antony was asked to return to the world to fetch the cloak of S. Athanasius in which to wrap the body of S. Paul who rightly thought that he was nearing death. So he sped away to his little dwelling and, refusing to answer the eager questions of his disciples, returned to the cave with the cloak.

But on the way he saw "Paul in robes of snowy-white ascending on high among the bands of angels and the choirs of prophets and apostles." The rest of the way to the cavern he traversed at such speed that he flew along like a bird, and not without reason, for on entering the cave he saw the lifeless body in a kneeling attitude with head erect and hands uplifted. He wrapped the body in the cloak and carried it out, but had no spade to dig a grave.

Soon there came, with manes flying, from the recesses of the desert, two lions. "At first he was horrified at the sight, but again turning his thoughts to God, he waited without alarm, as though they were doves that he saw. They came straight to the corpse of the blessed old man and there stopped, fawned upon it and lay down at his feet, roaring as if to make it known that they were mourning in the only way possible to them. Then they began to paw the ground close by, and vie with one another in excavating the sand, until they dug out a place just large enough to hold a man." Not until they had received his blessing with an "outburst of praise to Christ that even dumb animals felt His divinity," did the lions leave S. Antony to his own thoughts.

S. Jerome ends his narrative with the truly monastic reflexion: "I may be permitted to ask those who do not know the extent of their possessions, who adorn their homes with marble, who string house to house and field to field, what did this old man in his nakedness ever lack? Your drinking vessels are of precious stones: he satisfied his thirst with the hollow of his hand. Your tunics are of wrought gold: he had not the raiment of the meanest of your slaves. But, on the other hand, poor though he was, Paradise is open to him: you with all your gold will be received into Gehenna."

S. Paul the hermit has never bulked very large in Christian tradition, but churches in his name are not unknown; there is one at Norwich, England. A few miles below Montreal is the village of S. Paul l'Hermite.

Very much more famous is S. Antony, already named, a man of Coptic or Egyptian birth, generally reputed the father of Christian monasticism. His celebrated Life by S. Athanasius has given him an enduring name.[2] He is

[2] The work is printed in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. iv, pp. 188-221. The evidence for its authenticity is well given in the introduction. The external evidence for S. Athanasius' authorship seems to me far too strong to be set aside merely because parts of the work are rather unlike the great Bishop's customary style.

nowhere described as a pioneer. The Life itself mentions a convent for virgins (sec. 3) to which he sent his sister, and in the same connexion we are told: "For there were not yet many monasteries in Egypt and no monk at all knew of the distant desert." [3]

Monasticism, in all real essentials the same throughout the ages, appears indeed to have been well established by the time of S. Antony, or even a little before. Not only are monks in considerable numbers assumed to be in existence as a matter of course, but there is no hint of their origin having been recent. Socrates expressly says that the aged bishop and confessor Paphnutius, who at Nicæa defended the married clergy, had been brought up in a monastery,[4] and had himself had no experience of wedded life.

It can hardly be said that this Life gives promise of the glorious future of monasticism as one of the great constructive forces of the world. When S. Antony was "grown and arrived at boyhood and was advancing in years he could not endure to learn letters" and in later life, though his manners were not rough, but graceful and polite, and his speech was seasoned with the divine salt, he declared that whoever has a sound mind has no need of letters.

On another occasion, as reported by Socrates,[5] he retorted when asked how he could get on deprived of the comfort of books: "My book, O philosopher, is the nature of things that are made, and it is present whenever I wish to read the words of God."

Nor are we left in any real doubt by the general tenor of

[3] In Cassian's *Conferences*, xviii, ch. x, Abbot Piamun says that "monastery may mean the dwelling of a single monk." That is probably the meaning here.

[4] The word used is ἀσκητηριῳ and the late Prof. Gwatkin of Cambridge used vigorously to deny that any convent existed at so early a date, but whatever sort of religious house is indicated it must clearly have been very much the same thing. See Hefele, *History of the Christian Councils to 325 A.D.*, Tr. by W. R. Clark, p. 435 seq.

[5] *Ecclesiastical History*, bk. IV, ch. xxiii.

the Life that the sole object of S. Antony in leaving the busy haunts of men and going out to face the solitudes of the deserts was to save his own soul. Shutting himself up at first in a tomb and later in a fortress so long deserted that it was full of creeping beasts, he did everything to discourage visitors.

When they still found their way to his retreats he made for a yet remoter refuge on a hill of the inner desert, being conveyed thither by certain Saracens, who were presumably on trading journeys to the south, perhaps to the mysterious ruined settlements now known as Zimbabwe in Rhodesia, which are generally believed to have been built by men of that race. When on one occasion a military officer, who had induced him to come and make a brief address, desired that he would stay and continue his ministrations among men, he made the reply destined to be so famous in monastic annals: "Fishes, if they remain long on dry land, die. And so monks lose their strength if they loiter among you and spend their time with you. Wherefore as fish must hurry to the sea, so must we hasten to the mountain." [6]

A great part of the Life is taken up with descriptions of how S. Antony by prayer and fasting overcame the innumerable devils who kept coming to tempt him in many disguises, now seeking to terrify him by their frightful forms and again to tempt his virtue by assuming the shape of lovely girls. These imps are very familiar to readers of all monastic history, Buddhist as well as Christian.

S. Antony's primary object was to save his own soul, wrestling as an athlete by severe mortification to buffet his body and bring it into subjection: still, it would not be just to assert that he did nothing to benefit the world. To the numerous other monks he gave the most earnest exhortations; in the churches of Alexandria he sometimes spoke against

[6] *Life*, sec. 85. It will be remembered that Chaucer's monk repudiated this very remark.

the blasphemous errors of the Arians,[7] he helped those who persisted in getting access to him, both by curing their sicknesses and by exhorting them to a righteous life.

As S. Athanasius nobly says: "Who in grief met Antony and did not return rejoicing? Who came mourning for his dead and did not forthwith put off his sorrow? Who came in anger and was not converted to friendship? What poor and low-spirited man met him, who hearing and looking upon him, did not despise wealth and console himself in his poverty? What monk, having been neglectful, came to him and became not all the stronger?"

S. Antony established no order and appears to have left no organization.[8] This was done by his younger contemporary, S. Pachomius, of whose work a rather full description is given by Sozomen. Of all the early Church historians this writer is the most sympathetic with monasticism. He was himself a lawyer at Constantinople. "It is said," he writes, "that Pachomius at first practised philosophy alone in a cave, but that a holy angel appeared to him, and commanded him to call together some young monks, and live with them, for he had succeeded well in pursuing philosophy by himself, and to train them by the laws which were about to be delivered to him."

The monastic life was termed philosophy because it was regarded not only as the climax of Christianity, but also as the highest and noblest expression of the ancient culture of the Greeks. "A tablet was then given to him which is still carefully preserved. Upon it were inscribed rules by which he was to permit every one to eat, drink, work and fast according to his capacity. Those who ate heartily were to have arduous labour; the ascetic more easy tasks.

"Pachomius was to have many cells erected, each for three

[7] *Life*, sec. 87.

[8] But the great convent of S. Catharine on Mt. Sinai professes to follow his rule.

monks who were to eat in a common refectory in silence. They must have veils so arranged that they could not see each other, but only the table and the food. Only genuine travellers were to be received as guests.

"Those who wished to join the community must undergo a probation of three years with laborious tasks. They were to clothe themselves in skins, and to wear woollen tiaras adorned with purple nails, and linen tunics, and girdles. They were to sleep in their tunics and garments of skin, reclining on long chairs. * * * On the first and last days of each week they were to receive Communion in the Holy Mysteries, and were then to unloose their girdles and throw off their robes of skin.

"They were to pray twelve times every day and as often during the evening, and were to offer the same number of prayers during the night. At the ninth hour they were to pray thrice, and when about to partake of food; they were to sing a psalm before each prayer." [9] Different classes were to be distinguished by letters of the Greek alphabet.

There was a central house at Tabenna, in the Thebaid, where S. Pachomius dwelt himself. There were other convents which looked up to the community on that island as their mother. The Superior of the central house nominated the heads of the daughter houses, and at Easter and in August a general chapter of the whole was held. There was thus a Pachomian order in the true sense of the word, the only one that ever existed in the East and far more closely bound together than any that came into being in the West till something like a thousand years later (p. 125).

The order also included very numerous nuns, who dwelt on the mainland near the island of Tabenna, with a community of married women who seem to have had quarters on the far side of the Nile. Of one of the virgins, Palladius [10]

[9] Sozomen, *Eccl. Hist.*, bk. III, ch. xiv.

[10] *Lausiac History*, bk. 1, ch. xxxiii. This same chapter gives an account of the rule quite similar to that of Sozomen.

tells a story which is of great human interest from its close resemblance to the tale of "Cinderella," which has been traced to an ancient Egyptian original. She was not permitted to eat with the rest but was assigned the most menial work, and some of the sisters further showed their contempt by throwing over her the rinsings of their vessels.

The blessed Piterius, however, visited the convent by direction of an angel and he caused no small sensation by saying: "Ye yourselves are creatures of contempt, but this woman is your mother and mine, and I entreat God that He will give me a portion with her in the day of judgment."

The sequel was less satisfactory, for the blessed woman, unable to endure the honour and praise that all the sisters now lavished upon her, left the house, but "where she went and when she died no man knows."

There is evidence that the monks in early days were looked on with some suspicion by the bishops. Palladius[11] tells us how the blessed Nathaniel (d.c. 376) refused to escort for the distance of one step certain prelates who were all holy men and had prayed with him in his cell. When their servants found fault with this apparent want of courtesy he replied: "I died once for all to my lords the bishops and to the whole world, and I have a secret matter concerning which it is God only Who knoweth my heart and why I did not go forth and escort them."

At first S. Pachomius was not favoured by the official Church and his way of life was condemned by a council. But by showing great deference and respect to the bishops he contrived completely to overcome their suspicion. In 330, S. Athanasius as bishop officially visited Tabenna.

The loyalty of the monks to the Bishop of Alexandria appears sometimes to have left much to be desired. When Theophilus sent out his festal letter of 399, condemning the

[11] *Ib.*, bk. 1, ch. cxii.

heresy of the Anthropomorphites, so strongly were the solitaries inclined to disagree that in the desert of Scete, so famed for its religious houses, none would even permit the letter to be read except an abbot named Paphnutius, who had formerly been an anchorite and was so fond of being alone as to have earned the surname of the Buffalo.

It does not, however, appear that exemption from episcopal control was claimed. Two monks made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake, and to their great surprise found themselves excommunicated by the local bishop. So they went to make a complaint to "the head of our monasteries," the Bishop of Jerusalem. He confirmed the sentence, and the Bishop of Antioch took a precisely similar view.

Then they went to the great Patriarch and Bishop of Rome and said to him: "We have come unto thee because thou art the head of them all." Then the Bishop of Rome also said to them: "I also excommunicate you and excommunicate ye shall be." [12]

As a rule, the monks were laymen, and this was clearly considered the ideal. Of all people "a monk ought by all means to fly from women and bishops. For neither of them will allow him who has once been joined in close intercourse any longer to care for the quiet of his cell, or to continue with pure eyes in divine contemplation there his insight into holy things." [13]

Occasionally it did happen that a monk was compelled to take some administrative post in the Church. Cassian's point of view, which was undoubtedly very widely shared, is expressed in his account of "that most blessed and excellent man, Bishop Archbius, who had been carried off from the assembly of anchorites and given as bishop to the town

[12] *Lausiac History, Sayings of the Holy Fathers,* 524. Budge, vol. ii, p. 118.

[13] Cassian, *Institutes,* XI, xviii; *Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd ser., vol. xi, p. 279.

of Panephysis, and who kept all his life long to his purpose of solitude with such strictness that he relaxed nothing of the character of his former humility, nor flattered himself on the honour that had been added to him, for he vowed that he had not been summoned to that office as fit for it, but complained that he had been expelled from the monastic system as unworthy of it." [14]

Heretical monks were not unknown; Sozomen [15] and Socrates [16] tell us of the strange hallucinations of Eustathius, Bishop of Sebaste in Armenia, who founded a society of ascetics [17] and there were other examples, but as a rule monasticism was rigidly orthodox, at any rate in matters of importance. This sometimes drew upon the ascetics the wrath of Arianizing prelates.

The adherents of Lucius, the Bishop of Alexandria, who succeeded S. Athanasius and was far from walking in his steps, "assailed and disturbed and terribly harassed the monastic institutions in the desert; armed men rushed in the most ferocious manner upon those who were utterly defenceless, and who would not lift an arm to repel their violence; so that numbers of unresisting victims were in this manner slaughtered with a degree of wanton cruelty beyond description." [18]

This most unfortunate tendency to violence could be used by both sides, and several councils were disgraced by the turbulence of great hordes of monks whose bravery, as Milman says, often shamed the languid patriotism of the imperial troops.[19]

[14] Cassian, *Conferences*, XI, ch. ii, P.N.F. 2nd ser., vol. xi, p. 415.
[15] *Eccl. Hist.*, III, xiv.
[16] *Eccl. Hist.*, II, xliii.
[17] Their vile parody of Christian monasticism, which included a prohibition of marriage, was condemned by the synod at Gangra, about the middle of the fourth century. All details will be found in Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*, trans. H. N. Oxenham, vol. ii, p. 325 seq.
[18] Socrates, *Eccl. Hist.*, IV, xxii.
[19] *Latin Christianity*, vol. i, p. 344.

S. Pachomius prescribed only a moderate asceticism, but left his monks free to go beyond it if they would. Very soon the Egyptian solitaries were vying with one another in making records in asceticism, and that with enthusiasm at least equal to anything to be expected from the modern athlete.

Sozomen relates[20] how Dorotheus, a native of Thebes, "spent the day in collecting stones upon the sea-shore, which he used in erecting cells to be given to those who were unable to build them. During the night he employed himself in weaving baskets of palm leaves and these he sold to obtain the means of subsistence. He ate six ounces of bread with a few vegetables daily and drank nothing but water.

"Having accustomed himself to this extreme abstinence from his youth, he continued to observe it in old age. He was never seen to recline on a mat or a bed, nor even to place his limbs in an easy attitude, or willingly to surrender himself to sleep. * * * He was once asked by a person who came to him while he was exhausting himself, why he destroyed the body. 'Because it is destroying me,' was the reply." And when Palladius urged him to throw himself upon a mat of palm leaves and rest a little, he replied in a grieved manner: "If thou art able to persuade the angels to sleep thou wilt be able to persuade me."

Few of these monkish athletes could hear of any one else's record in asceticism without promptly desiring to beat it. So very abstemious was Macarius of Alexandria, surnamed the Glorious, that not even the hairs of his beard would grow.[21] Stories of these ascetic records fill up a very great part of all the histories of the Egyptian solitaries, but they are not very remarkable for variety.

Monks, particularly in the East, have at all times in their

[20] *Eccles. Hist.*, VI, xxix; Palladius, *Lausiac History*, I, ii, gives a very similar account.
[21] *Lausiac Hist.*, II, xviii.

lonely wilds felt a sympathetic fellowship with the beasts, who are almost always represented as their friends. This beautiful trait seems to betray far more the influence of India (p. 12) than that of early Christianity.

Even S. Paul could ask: "Doth God take care for oxen?" [22] In his "Life of Malchus, the Captive Monk," S. Jerome relates how a lioness facilitated his escape.[23] He had been led to relieve the monotony of his captivity by watching the useful labours of a colony of ants "whose toil is for the community and since nothing belongs to any one, all things belong to all." The description given of the ants shows close observation of their ways.

Sulpicius Severus [24] gives a detailed account of how a certain recluse living in a little hut in the valley of the Nile used to share his supper with a wolf. One day the wolf came and found no monk, but as it knew the way to the larder, it saw no reason why there should be no supper either. So it helped itself to a loaf, but afterwards when the monk returned it displayed a most dog-like contrition and the former pleasant relations were restored.

The incident leads to the delightful reflexion: "Behold, I beg of you, the power of Christ to Whom all is wise that is irrational, and all is mild that is by nature savage. A wolf discharges duty; a wolf acknowledges the crime of theft; a wolf is confounded with a sense of shame; when called for it presents itself; it offers its head to be stroked; and it has a perception of the pardon granted to it, just as if it had a feeling of shame on account of its misconduct. This is Thy power, O Christ; Thine, O Christ, are Thy marvellous works."

Macarius of Alexandria, already mentioned, was dili-

[22] I Cor., ix, 9.
[23] Sec. 9, *Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., vol. vi, pp. 315-318.
[24] *Dialogues*, I, xiv.

gently sought out by a hyena who brought him to her den and besought him to cure her blind whelp. On this being successfully accomplished, she brought a sheep-skin as fee.[25] These stories are quite worthy of S. Francis of Assisi and the delightful manner in which he saw brothers and sisters in creatures of every kind (p. 155).

One of the strangest of these animal tales is that of a holy man who, having fallen a victim to the wiles of a girl and fearing to be delivered to everlasting torment, roamed out in penitence to the farthest recesses of the wilds. A certain brother, minded to go and see if any man were living in the inner desert, after finding a monk sitting in a cave who crumbled into dust and became nothing at all on being touched, for he was dead, "saw a number of beasts which are called buffaloes and the servant of God was in their midst, naked; and his hair had been made into a covering for his shame." At first he was vexed at seeing a fellow-mortal, whom he mistook for a devil in disguise, but eventually he told him his story.[26]

Animal tales are a very usual feature of later monasticism in the West as well as the East. S. Guthlac of Croyland [27] (p. 228) said: "Who hath led his life after God's will the wild beasts and the birds become friendly with him. To the man who will live away from the world the angels draw nigh." In 1672 a Jesuit named Toussaint Bridoul published at Lille "The School of the Eucharist," in which he shows how animals of every kind, beasts, insects, birds and fish display their reverence for Christ.[28]

It was the excellent John Cassian (c. 360-c. 433), who first seriously brought to the attention of the West what was

[25] *Lausiac History*, II, xviii. The same story occurs in (§ 376) *Questions and Answers on the Ascetic Rule*, Budge, II, p. 228, but the animal is a panther.

[26] *Lausiac History*, II, xvii. Budge, I, p. 236-268.

[27] Gray Birch, *Memorials of St. Guthlac*, p. 37 (1881).

[28] The chapter headings are given by G. G. Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, vol. i, pp. 492-494.

best in the monasticism of the East. Gennadius [29] tells us that he was "natione Scytha," but if he was really of barbarian birth (which is very doubtful), he affords a most inspiring example of the manner in which the dwindling empire was sharing its civilization with the outer world. While still very young, Cassian entered a monastery at Bethlehem in company with his friend Germanus. He must frequently have worshipped in the great Church of the Nativity, the oldest Christian building of any size that still exists, then about fifty years old (p. 226).

Beneath its choir is the cave where Christ was born, and a little to the north is the rock-cut grotto where at least traditionally S. Jerome [30] lived and wrote, but that great doctor did not settle in Bethlehem (close of 386), till Cassian had with his friend passed on into Egypt. While travelling in the valley of the Nile, Cassian interviewed many famous monks and what they had to say he records in his "Conferences."

As these were written in Provence he must have kept a very full diary while in Egypt, or else the long and very detailed discourses attributed to numerous abbots and others are really his own composition, based, no doubt, on his memory of many conversations of years before. Internal evidence points very strongly indeed to the former view.

The "Conferences" have a genuine ring and there is strong individuality in the discourses of many of the monks. Cassian's whole point of view is honest and sincere and his works inspire a most genuine respect for his character.

The monasticism of that day is clearly most completely unconscious of its great and splendid future, nor is there any hint that the monks hoped to do anything more than

[29] *Catalogus*, C. lxii. It is possible that this does not mean Scythian; it may have some reference to Scete in Egypt.

[30] This great Father is mentioned by Cassian with profound respect in the preface to the *Institutes* and in his *Treatise against Nestorius*, bk. VII, ch. xxvi.

to save their own souls by a life peculiarly acceptable to God. Unbounded glory in the other world was believed to be the certain lot of those who faithfully served God in those lonely wilds.[31]

The keynote of the whole seems to be struck by an abbot named John, who explained that in the utmost expanse of the wilderness the monks were caught up into celestial ecstasies and saw something of that life which can only be compared to the bliss of the angels.[32] Visitors were a most unwelcome distraction.

An exceedingly high standard of asceticism was not infrequently attained. Abbot Patermucius had entered a convent accompanied by his little boy, a child of eight. He was required to give the most convincing proofs that affection for his own flesh and blood meant far less to him than obedience and Christian mortification. Uncomplainingly he saw the poor boy neglected, ill-treated, clothed in rags, and starved.

At last he stood prepared to throw the child into the river to drown, but this was prevented by the other monks. God was so well pleased by this complete self-abnegation that "He forthwith revealed to the superior that by this obedience the father had copied the deed of Abraham, and when shortly afterwards the same abbot of the monastery departed out of this life to Christ he preferred him to all the brethren and left him as his successor." [33] Of the child we hear no more.

In much the same spirit, a brother, after an absence of fifteen years from his home in Pontus, received a huge packet of letters from his father, mother, and many friends.[34] Turning over the matter in his mind for some

[31] *Institutes*, bk. IV, ch. xxxiii.
[32] *Conferences*, XIX, v.
[33] *Institutes*, IV, ch. xxvii-xxviii.
[34] *Institutes*, V. ch. xxxii. (See p. 255 for a very similar story of Ignatius Loyola, which illustrates the unvarying type of monastic ideals through all the centuries.)

time he reflected, "What thoughts will the reading of these suggest to me, which will incite to senseless joy or useless sorrow! For how many days will they draw off the attention of my heart from the contemplation I have set before me by the recollection of those who wrote them! How long will it take for the disturbance of mind thus created to be calmed!" So without even untying the package he tossed it into a fire.

The holy Abbot Theonas had left his wife, despite her earnest entreaties not to break up the home. In the desert in a very short time he was so famous for the splendour of his sanctity and humility that he was by the judgment of all chosen abbot.[35] Cassian, however, shows his good sense by expressing very serious doubts as to whether marriage be not too sacred a thing to be lightly discarded even for the sake of a yet higher ideal.

It is delightful to get so liberal an attitude toward other faiths as is illustrated by the following story. The Abbot Macarius, on one occasion raised to life the body of an ancient Egyptian, and having heard that he lived under kings of very early date and had never so much as heard the name of Christ, he bade him "Sleep in peace with the others in your own order to be aroused again by Christ in the end." [36]

This is in rather striking contrast with the more usual attitude of the Christian Fathers and most of the monks, who identified the gods of old with the devils from whom they conceived themselves to be suffering so much. An old monk from Thebais, whose father had been a pagan priest, gives a most delightful story of Satan reviewing his forces in the temple where he used to minister.

A devil who in thirty days "stirred up many wars and revolts and caused the shedding of blood," was beaten for not doing far more. Other imps with similar records, such

[35] *Conferences*, XXI, ix. [36] *Ib.*, XV, iii.

as stirring up storms and sinking ships, or making war at a marriage feast, fared exactly the same.

But at length came a devil who was able to report, "I have been in the desert for forty years, striving with a monk and tonight I have hurled him into fornication." Satan at once rose up and embraced that imp, delightedly setting him upon the throne beside him with the words, "And so thou hast been able to do so great a work in so short a time! For there is nothing which I prize so highly as the fall of a monk." [37]

The monks were very sure that as the vanguard of the armies of the Lord they had to bear the brunt of infernal attacks upon mankind. Abbot Serenus explained that the atmosphere between heaven and earth is ever filled with a thick crowd of spirits always on the lookout to do harm and hindered neither by bodily fatigue, occupation in business, nor care about daily food, but a merciful providence in order that man might have some peace of mind has rendered them invisible to mortal eyes.[38]

It is, however, comforting to know that the same abbot thoroughly discerned both by his own experience and by the testimony of the elders that the devils had not in his day the same power as in the early days of the anchorites. For in those times when monks first dared to live in the haunts of the devils, so great was their violence that the ascetics could not all go to bed at night. While some snatched a little sleep others kept watch, praying and singing psalms. But later on, the imps showed some disposition to accept the inevitable, though persecuting the monks as far as they could.[39].

But while concentrating their efforts on the unfortunate monks the devils let no one alone. A pious woman who was

[37] *Lausiac History; Sayings of the Holy Fathers,* bk. I, ch. xiv, sec. 632. Budge, II, p. 146.
[38] *Conf.,* VIII, xii.
[39] *Ib.,* VII, xxiii.

devoutly saying her prayers to the Blessed Trinity in a church, suddenly found Satan by her side. He asked why she was satisfied to pray like a man and suggested that she say instead: "Glory be to thee, O Mary, mother of Christ." [40] The story is very strange considering that the Virgin was afterwards to become the most popular of monastic saints.

We nowhere get the slightest hint that the monks ever doubted that they were the most perfect of mankind. In reply to the direct question, "Supposing a man in the world conducteth himself in an absolutely perfect manner and according to what is right, is not his labour equal to that of a beginner?" An old monk replied laconically, "No." [41] Yet he would only give a commonplace and very unsatisfying answer when the brethren said: "Why do the monks who have led a life of hard labour become in their old age silly and simple and act in a foolish way like children and drunken men?" [42] No effort whatever was made to question the fact.

Although we read in vain for any conception that the monks had any duty to the world, the holy men did not by any means refuse to help if they were sought out in their desert fastnesses. The blessed Macarius, the Egyptian, restored to her proper form a wife who had been turned into the similitude of a mare by sorcery employed by a rascal lover, bidding her be more regular in receiving the Blessed Sacrament; and he did other acts of mercy. Yet to avoid the vast concourse that came to consult him, he constructed an underground tunnel leading from his cell to a cave yet more remote.[43]

Thais, the courtesan of Alexandria, was converted by the monks and persuaded to enter a sisterhood.

[40] This tale occurs twice, *Lausiac History*, bk. II, *Questions and Answers on the Ascetic Rule*, secs. 575, 706. Budge, vol. ii, pp. 270, 335.
[41] *Ib.*, 611, Budge, II, p. 286.
[42] *Ib.*, 639, Budge, II, p. 307. The line taken is that they become as innocent children.
[43] *Laus. Hist.*, bk. I, ch. xvii. Budge, I, pp. 115-116.

Perhaps the most human touch in all the long accounts of the monks that we have is Cassian's stories of some who, having given up great riches, vast estates, and large sums of money in order to enter a monastery, are much perturbed over the loss of a pencil or a pin.[44]

This earliest period of Christian monasticism can hardly be called constructive. The ascetics were very individualistic and had little notion of working together. Instead of doing any great thing for the world, their drawing away so many earnest men and women from parenthood must have had a most devastating effect on the empire at a time when the dwindling of its population was the chief single cause of its fall.[45] Several of the Fathers try to defend virginity from this point of view, not as a rule very successfully.

In themselves, perhaps, the very voluminous tales that we may read on the subject of Egyptian monasticism are not particularly absorbing or varied. But their intense human interest lies in the fact that in them we may trace the sources of one of the most splendid civilizations that the world has ever known. Latin monasticism was never ashamed of its origins. In all sorts of mediæval writings one comes across appreciative references to the ancient Fathers of the desert. The triple foundations of modern civilization are the culture of Greece, the organizing power of Rome, and the monasticism of the Christian Church. The third was to show itself, paradoxical as it may appear, by far the most pregnant and lifeful.

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[44] *Conferences,* I, vi. In actual scholarship Egyptian monasticism reached its climax in Abbot Shenoute who was taken by S. Cyril to the Council of Ephesus.

[45] Very full proofs of this may be found in Seeley, *Roman Imperialism.* Milman (*History of Christianity,* III, p. 219) quotes on the subject from S. Ambrose a defence which is singularly unconvincing.

III, Theodoret, Gennadius and Rufinus, historical writings, etc.; vol. IV, Athanasius, *Life of Antony* and other works; vol. XI, Sulpicius Severus, Vincent of Lerins, and John Cassian.

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The atmosphere of the desert monks is very well represented in Kingsley's *Hypatia,* and Anatole France's *Thais.* This phase of Church history seems rather to have been neglected in the ordinary works.

CHAPTER II

THE WORK OF S. BASIL AND HIS SUCCESSORS

The great S. Basil (c. 329-379) belonged to an aristocratic family which had for several generations been Christian and owned considerable estates among the mountains of Cappadocia. He is famous for his unswerving support of the Nicene cause when Arianism was exceedingly strong and for his large share in composing the liturgy of the Church, but even more for his organisation of monasticism. The uplands of Asia Minor had early become one of the chief strongholds of the Church in days when, in the western part of the empire, Christianity was practically confined to city congregations, the country districts still being pagan.

S. Basil's father had embraced the profession of law. The boy was one of a family of ten. He had every advantage that birth and money could secure. In 351, with his friend Gregory Nazianzen, he went to study at the university of Athens, which was then one of the principal centres of learning in the empire. His studious and sensitive nature suffered greatly from the hazing with which, even then, students sought to relieve the arduous monotony of learning, for the atmosphere of great colleges has in some respects been one of the most permanent features of Western civilisation.[1] Later on, he found the life exceedingly congenial. After graduating, to use a modern term which

[1] This is described in great detail in his *Funeral Oration* by Gregory N. (secs. 15, 16), in words that might describe the present-day stunts of American students, if a few local details were changed.

was not then in use, he travelled extensively in the lands beside the eastern Mediterranean, carefully avoiding the society of heretics. For the character of the Egyptian monks he acquired a most lively admiration; in their way of life, he saw possibilities of almost endless good.

Thus exceedingly well equipped by birth, education, and travel, reinforced by great natural ability, he returned to his native Cappadocia, determined to advance the cause of the Christian Church. In a most lovely spot beside the Iris, perhaps, as Lowther Clarke suggests, on the ancestral estates, he organized his famous monastery, the Monte Cassino of the East.

The ancient monks, it would seem, had made it a special point to seek out the most unattractive sites for their habitations that flat, treeless wastes of burning sand could provide. S. Basil had other conceptions. His own vivid description of the valley where he placed his convent does much to recall the situations of some of the loveliest abbeys of Yorkshire and the Scottish Lowlands. It is almost unique among monastic writings, which scarcely ever show any appreciation of natural scenery, and it also gives us a charming insight into the beauty of his own character.

"There is a lofty mountain covered with thick woods, watered towards the north with cool and transparent streams. A plain lies beneath, enriched by the waters which are ever draining off from it, and skirted by a spontaneous profusion of trees almost thick enough to be a fence; so as even to surpass Calypso's Island, which Homer seems to have considered the most beautiful spot on the earth.

"Indeed it is like an island, enclosed as it is on all sides; for deep hollows cut off two sides of it; the river, which has lately fallen down a precipice, runs all along the front, and is impassable as a wall; while the mountain extending itself behind, and meeting the hollows in a crescent, stops

up the path at its roots. There is but one pass, and I am master of it.

"Behind my abode there is another gorge, rising into a ledge up above, so as to command the extent of the plains and the stream which bounds it, which is not less beautiful, to my taste, than the Strymon as seen from Amphipolis. For while the latter flows leisurely, and swells into a lake almost, and is too still to be a river, the former is the most rapid stream I know, and somewhat turbid, too, from the rocks just above; from which, shooting down, and eddying in a deep pool, it forms a most pleasant scene for myself or any one else; and is an inexhaustible resource to the country people in the countless fish which its depths contain. What need to tell of the exhalations from the earth, or the breezes from the river? Another might admire the multitude of flowers and singing birds; but leisure I have none for such thoughts.

"However, the chief praise of the place is, that being happily disposed for produce of every kind, it nurtures what to me is the sweetest produce of all, quietness; indeed, it is not only rid of the bustle of the city, but is even unfrequented by travellers, except a chance hunter. It abounds indeed in game, as well as other things, but not, I am glad to say, in bears or wolves, such as you have, but in deer, and wild goats, and hares, and the like. Does it not strike you what a foolish mistake I was near making when I was eager to change this spot for your Tiberina, the very pit of the whole earth?" [2] His sister, Macrina, founded a convent for women on the other side of the stream.

For S. Basil the ascetic life is Christianity in its purest form. The monk is the truest Christian of all mankind. He and he alone can follow Christ's precepts in a perfectly literal way. The effect on the community was not very prominent in the minds of the men of that day. The world

[2] Letter XIV to Gregory, *P.N.*, 2nd ser., vol. viii, pp. 124-125.

was obviously passing away; the second advent was perhaps very close at hand. The supreme importance of saving individual souls eclipsed and completely overshadowed all other considerations. Few of us can see things with the eyes of the fourth century.

Yet in this direction, as in others, S. Basil greatly improved upon the monasticism of Egypt. By placing some of his convents in cities, by establishing schools in connexion with them—which were not purely for the purpose of training recruits—by carrying on much charitable work in conjunction, and by bringing the whole system into union with the organisation of the Church, he may be said, and that for the first time, to have justified the existence of monasticism from the standpoint of the world.

But he never attempts to dodge the fact that the primary object is to benefit the souls of the monks, not to uplift society. At the same time, his strong feeling that the cœnobitical [3] life is far superior to that of the hermit is based on the fact that for the solitary, many duties of Christian love are impossible, while he has no one to correct him for his faults and he is in danger of imagining he has reached perfection.

The Basilian rule is contained in the ascetic writings, especially the "Regulæ fusius tractatæ" and the "Regulæ brevius tractatæ," which are in form of question and answer.[4] They are most unsystematic, not to be compared with the admirably clear rule of S. Benedict (p. 77) nor even that of S. Francis of Assisi (p. 158).

No Basilian order ever existed, but these writings have been the main guides of Oriental monks to the present day.

[3] That is to say community life as opposed to eremitical or entirely solitary existence.

[4] There is strong external evidence that these were written by S. Basil, though Sozomen mentions the report that they were sometimes attributed to a heretic, Eustathius of Sebaste, *Eccl. Hist.*, III, xiv. It seems certain that this was not the case.

S. Basil had probably visited Tabenna and he was indebted to S. Pachomius for many valuable ideas, but he found nothing worthy of imitation in the order that bound the different houses closely together. In fact even in Egypt it must before long have died out.

S. Basil's precepts are based very closely on Scripture. The monk must ever be ready to follow the examples of Christ and the Apostles in every possible detail. Sometimes his interpretations seem rather forced, as when he quotes I Corinthians (vii. 15) as possibly justifying a profession of virginity without the consent of husband or wife. In S. Basil's plan, monasteries were to be distributed, not at haphazard but as they are really required. Only one should exist in each parish (κωμη) and if more have been instituted it may be better to consolidate. The best size is such that one lamp and one fire will suffice; that is, that the community would probably be from thirty to forty in number.

From the standpoint of secular history perhaps the most remarkable feature of S. Basil's monasticism is his fear of anything resembling that democracy which in later years was to be evolved in the chapter-houses of the West and to become a noteworthy contribution to the progress of mankind. The power of the Superior, in S. Basil's system, is almost absolute; he must be obeyed even to death, though not if his orders are clearly contrary to the word of God.

The best educated of the monks are to devote themselves mainly to study, particularly of the sacred Scriptures; these form a privileged class, nominated by the Superior. They form a sort of council with the definite duty of admonishing the Superior himself if they consider he is making a serious mistake; to them an inferior monk who feels he has any grievance may appeal.

In the absence of the Superior one of them is to take his

place "lest a democratic state of things may arise." [5] The whole brotherhood may at times be called together, particularly in the matter of receiving or expelling members, but this house chapter is not entrusted with any considerable power.

The Superior himself, instead of being elected by it, must be chosen by the heads of the neighbouring convents and after a time of probation accepted by the brethren. The organisation is decidedly aristocratic. It seems quite certain that, in practice at any rate, the brethren whose chief duty was study would mostly be those from the wealthier homes; the poorer monks, including many former slaves, might have only the minimum of education needed to chant the choir offices and such training as was necessary for their manual work. The distinction may have corresponded, though not very closely, to that between monks and lay brothers, particularly in the Cistercian order, during later years (p. 151).

As in all systems of Christian monasticism, prayer is the central duty of the monk, but this is not to be an excuse for idleness or for shirking work.[6] Eight offices are prescribed for day and night with appropriate psalms, but if work made it necessary, some might be said in the fields. Extremes of asceticism are severely discouraged. The monks are to have a midday meal and a light supper as well. The best sort of work is agriculture, but weaving, shoemaking, building, carpentering, and metal-working are also suitable for monks.

A most striking feature of S. Basil's precepts is their relative timidity. Monks must renounce their worldly possessions, but the rules contemplate that some property may be retained. S. Basil himself enjoyed some income of his own till his death. This might perhaps have been on account of the necessities of his position as Bishop of Cæsarea,

[5] *Regulae fusius tractatae*, 45. [6] *Regulae fusius tractatae*, 37.

but wealthy monks are definitely warned not to make indecorous display.[7]

Journeys are unsuited to the spirit of monasticism, but if they must be undertaken two had best travel together as a check on each other for the due performance of religious duties. Nothing but water may be drunk, except a little wine for the sake of health. Obedience must be absolute and permanent; to break the vow is sacrilege, yet if the monk has genuine grievances for which he cannot get redress he may leave the house without sin, for the brethren have become strangers.

S. Basil very definitely prefers cœnobitic to eremitic monasticism, but instead of repudiating the latter altogether "he founded cells for ascetics and hermits, but at no great distance from his cœnobitic communities, and, instead of distinguishing and separating the one from the other, as if by some intervening wall, he brought them together and united them, in order that the contemplative spirit might not be cut off from society, nor the active life be uninfluenced by the contemplative, but that, like sea and land, by an interchange of their several gifts, they might unite in promoting the one object, the glory of God." [8]

In reading the ascetic writings of Basil it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that considerable concession had to be made to human nature. Ideals have greatly to be tempered by the limitations of what was actually possible.

[7] In one of his letters (CCLXXXIV), S. Basil asks an assessor to exempt monks from taxation as "if their lives are consistent with their profession, they possess neither money, nor bodies." By their prayers the monks are able to secure the official's salvation, so he will wish to regard them with special reverence. (Such arguments might fall a bit flat on the revenue collectors of the present day!) A. Lenoir, *Architecture Monastique*, chap. i, p. 16, says: "En 889, un moine de l'abbaye de Saint Père de Chartres possédait un terrain aboutissant au cloître de l'abbaye, et obtenait de l'evêque Aimeri la permission de le vendre à un autre religieux," giving the reference *Cartul: de S. Père de Chartres*, i, p. 16. This would indicate something similar in the West.

[8] Gregory N., *Funeral Oration*, sec. 62.

Through every phase of Oriental monasticism we miss the iron discipline of Rome.

Perhaps the greatest permanent achievement of S. Basil was to bring European civilization to the help of what had been purely Asiatic.[9] The combination of Oriental thought with the organizing power of the West has given to the world very much of its very best. Asia has a vision of the vistas of eternity to which Europe cannot pretend; Europe has a practical ability that Asia can hardly comprehend.

It was S. Basil's privilege to bring together the wisdom of Egypt and of Greece and to use both for the service of monasticism and the Church. S. Pachomius had adumbrated future developments by building a monastic organization parallel to that of the episcopate of the official church, and yet completely separate. S. Basil made the bishop his monastic superintendent and completely amalgamated the regular and the secular sides of the Church. The monasteries were to be as much a part of the organization of Christianity as the parish churches themselves.

He was acutely conscious that the episcopate at that time stood in most serious need of such reformation as monasticism could give. "The very title of bishop has been conferred on wretched slaves, for no servant of God would choose to come forward in opposition. * * * At the town of Doara they have brought shame upon the poor name of bishop, and have set there a wretch, an orphans' domestic, a runaway from his own masters, to flatter a godless woman." [10] This gloomy view can be abundantly corroborated from other sources; indeed the extremely poor character of many of the bishops that he met a little later was an element in the apostacy of Julian, but it is necessary to make rather large allowances not only for S. Basil's very natural animosity against the time-serving methods of

[9] Egypt, though in Africa, is, of course, Asiatic in its culture.
[10] *Letter* CCXXXIX, to Eusebius, Bishop of Samosata.

Arianising court bishops, but also for his undoubtedly strong aristocratic prejudices.

Monasticism thus gave new strength and new enthusiasm to the whole Church. At the same time, the gradual establishment of the principle that only celibate monks and not the married clergy could hold the highest places in the hierarchy was not at all satisfactory. The monk indeed in centuries to come was very often to show himself more qualified than any others to take his place in the rule of the world, but this was by no means invariably the case.

The Western Church did better in throwing open all high offices to monk and secular alike. When monastically minded pontiffs like Hildebrand (Gregory VII) imposed celibacy on all the clergy, the difference between seculars and regulars became far less important, though it was never blurred.

S. Basil was quite right in feeling that in monasticism was by far the most hopeful influence for carrying out much needed Church reform. In some cases, at least, laymen felt exactly the same; the monk was during the fourth century upholding, on the whole, the best Christian influences there were.

Socrates [11] tells us how the devout emperor Theodosius the younger "rendered his palace little different from a monastery, for he rose early in the morning with his sisters and recited responsive hymns in praise of the Deity," this throughout the centuries being the chief basis of monastic worship. At the same time, in company with others, Socrates finds much to condemn in the violent and unmannerly behaviour of many monks who came into the cities to take part in that disgraceful rioting about creeds that gave the world a sort of evil foretaste of the miserable wars about religion that were yet to be.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the not very in-

[11] *Eccles. Hist.*, VII, xxii.

spiring post-Basilian period of Eastern monasticism is the fact that no real progress has been made since the great work S. Basil did. Compared with what we find in the West, reform movements have been rather feeble, though, much as in the story of almost all Eastern lands, revival has followed decay in lengthy sequence, without the development of any features really new. As with so many other inventions of the East, monasticism was to have in the West a career out of all proportion to anything it achieved in the countries of its birth.

Lowther Clarke distinguishes four periods in the story of Eastern monasticism between the days of S. Basil and the present year. During the *first,* the centre of interest has shifted from Egypt to Palestine and both cœnobitic and eremitic asceticism flourished side by side. Mar Sabbas and other famous solitaries came from S. Basil's own province of Cappadocia. This well-known leader restored the old Egyptian view that the hermit is a nobler figure than the cloister monk. The theory was that by preparation in a monastery the monk might eventually be qualified to fight the devil all alone and thus to pass from glory to glory.

Both eremites and cœnobites were controlled by archimandrites under the general jurisdiction of the patriarch, but sometimes there was a single head for both kinds of monks. On one occasion, Sabbas, who was Archimandrite of the anchorites, boasted to Theodosius, the superintendent of the cœnobites: "My lord, you are a Superior of children, but I am a Superior of Superiors, for each of those under me is independent and therefore Superior of his own cell." [12]

This kind of glory seems to have culminated in S. Simeon Stylites, well known from Tennyson's poem, who enjoyed a most extraordinary reputation. In him we recognise more strongly than ever the abiding influence of Asia. After

[12] L. Clarke, *S. Basil the Great,* p. 30, quoted from *Vita Sabbae,* p. 332. Holl, *Enthusiasmus.*

ascetic records of many kinds, including the burial of his person up to the neck for many months, he became the most famous of pillar saints. He never descended from his constantly heightening column until at last he said his prayers and took his scanty food and troubled rest sixty feet above the plain. Enormous crowds of pilgrims from every corner of the world between Britain and Persia thronged the spot, while at the base of the pillar devout disciples watched, and counted how often the saint aloft spread out his arms in fervent prayer. Theodoret calls him "that great miracle of the world"; Evagrius "that angel upon earth."

But though he dictated some letters about the faith, he refused an urgent request from the emperor himself that he would use the boundless influence that his severe austerities had won for himself among the people to compose those miserable quarrels about Nestorianism that were almost ruining the Church and seriously weakening the empire in its struggle with the unsleeping barbarian foes. Nothing can better prove the extent of the reverence that was felt for him than the fact that his body was taken to Antioch with more than imperial magnificence that it might be a protection to that defenceless city; while around his pillar was erected one of the finest churches of the East.

But to the Western world this particular type of saintliness made no appeal, and when an imitator tried to establish himself near Trier the demolition of his pillar was ordered by an unimaginative and unsympathetic bishop.[13]

Whether this severe asceticism, this eschewing of everything that was beautiful, or pleasant, or even clean, was any real fulfilment of the law of Christ or any legitimate development of Christianity we are not concerned to ask; from the point of view of mankind it is impossible not to feel that Christian monasticism had in the fifth century reached its very nadir. Not only was it doing almost nothing for

[13] Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, IV, 32.

the world; it would not even in any real degree utilize its vast forces in the service of the Church.

But this point of view is wholly modern. To contemporaries, solitaries were by their severe asceticism scaling the steep incline to heaven in unbroken communion with God. They saw no more. Religion was purely a matter for the individual, not for the community. This seems to be a very dominant spirit in all monastic literature up to, and indeed beyond, the day when Luther in trembling fear for his own salvation entered the Augustinian friary at Erfurt.

Sozomen tells us how S. Chrysostom definitely objected to monks trying to interfere in the business of the world, regarding that as quite outside their sphere. "John (Chrysostom) had several disputes with many of the monks, particularly with Isaac. He highly commended those who remained in quietude in the monasteries and practised philosophy there; he protected them from all injustice and solicitously supplied whatever necessities they might have. But the monks who went out of doors and made their appearance in cities he reproached and regarded as insulting philosophy.

"For these causes he incurred the hatred of the clergy and of many of the monks, who called him a hard, passionate, morose, and arrogant man. They therefore attempted to bring his life into public disrepute by stating confidently, as if it were the truth, that he would eat with no one, and that he refused every invitation to a meal that was offered him." [14] It certainly does not seem that the last complaint involved anything very damaging to the character of the Patriarch.

In the *second* period the centre of interest shifts to Constantinople, whither many monks had gone, drawn like others into the vortex of the great capital. The first convents appear to have been founded in that city during the reign of Theodosius (375-395), though earlier claims have been made. The monks showed a disposition to support their opinions

[14] Sozomen, *Eccles. Hist.*, VIII, ix.

in the numerous theological controversies of the metropolis rather by arm than by brain. Some evidently sympathized with the errors of Eutyches, himself a monk, whose views are held to this day by the ancient Church of Armenia (Gregorian). Accordingly, the Council of Chalcedon, in 451, definitely placed monks under episcopal control, forbidding them to take any part in ecclesiastical or secular affairs "unless in case of necessity they are required to do so by the bishop." It is a point of complaint that monks "go about in the cities indiscriminately." [15] This action was certainly in line with S. Basil's reforms.

Justinian, about the middle of the sixth century, tightened monastic discipline still further, but in exactly the same direction. The common life was made obligatory and any anchorite's cell must be within the precincts of a monastery. The bishop must preside over the foundation of a new convent and supervise the election of the abbot, besides exercising a general jurisdiction.

Thus the connexion between monasticism and the official Church was still further emphasized. The great Emperor, like others, appears to have failed to curb the meanderings of the hermits. Unfortunately the history of asceticism, like that of every other human institution, has frequently revealed wide differences between practice and theory.

The Second Trullan Synod, so called because like the Sixth Œcumenical Council it convened in the Trullan Hall of the imperial palace in Constantinople, in 692 decreed that no one under ten might become a monk, that no one might inhabit a cell of his own till he had spent three years in a monastery, and that hermits might not frequent the streets of towns.[16] Subdeacons, deacons, and priests may not send away their wives,[17] but if anyone is consecrated bishop,

[15] Canon 4, Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*, vol. iii, pp. 389-390 (Eng. tr.).
[16] Canons 40-42; *Ib.*, p. 229.
[17] Canon 13; *Ib.*, p. 226.

his wife must go into a convent at a considerable distance, the bishop still being liable for her support.[18]

Thus we find nearly completed the relations between the monastic and secular clergy that S. Basil had begun. If one of the latter must put away his wife on attaining the episcopate, there is no very wide step in retaining the higher offices for the monastic clergy altogether.

A most unlooked-for endorsement of Christian monasticism about this time is to be found in the Koran. Those most friendly to the true believers are the Christians: "This cometh to pass because there are priests and monks among them and because they are not elated with pride." [19]

In the *third* period, there was a strong movement (such as later occurred in the West) to claim for monks exemption from all episcopal control below that of the Patriarch of Constantinople himself. The centre of interest shifts to the great metropolitan monastery which was attached to the Church of the Studion, so called from its founder, an ex-consul named Studius. The date of its erection was about 463. It was served by the Akoimetai or sleepless monks, who by dividing their number into choruses kept up unceasing service, both by night and day.

Toward the end of the eighth century the house had fallen on evil days. Its inmates numbered but ten. These were the times when the iconoclast emperors had attempted to reduce the Church to a mere department of the State, and the brunt of the battle fell upon the monks, who were far less inclined than the secular clergy to yield. Theodore, the Hegumenos of Studion, undertook a most vigorous reorganization of the monastery, largely under the influence of S. Basil's ascetic writings. His ideals included important social work. Education for the young and hospital care for

[18] Canon 48; *Ib.*, p. 230.

[19] *Koran*, Sura V. Sale's trans., vol. i, p. 147; Chicago ed. (1 vol.), p. 128.

the sick were provided within the institution. The poor were helped by pastoral care, sometimes with gifts of money. Prisoners were visited. Funeral rites were performed. Attention was devoted to the careful copying of manuscripts, one of the greatest services to mankind that monks were ever to perform.

Theodore tried to abolish the distinction which had grown up between monks of the little habit and the great. The latter was a longer and ampler cloak which was granted to older monks as a mark of particular dignity; it was solemnly put on with a sort of renewal of vows. But the hegumenos was chosen from among the little habit whose duty it was to carry on both the practical work of the convent and the entertainment of the guests, thus leaving the elder brethren entirely free for the higher duties of contemplation. Theodore maintained that as there is but one baptism, so it was fitting that there should be but a single habit for all the monks.

The influence of the reformed Studion spread to the whole orthodox world, especially to the two great centres of monasticism that were developing at Kiev and on the peninsula of Mount Athos.

During the tenth and eleventh centuries were erected the remarkable monasteries of Meteora in Thessaly, which, perched high upon their beetling crags, only to be reached by ropes, formed some protection against the invading deluge of the Slavs. This is some evidence of the patriotic part the monk was playing even in the decaying civilization of the East.

The *fourth* period is largely connected with Mount Athos, the famous rocky promontory rising above the Ægean, which forms the oldest of all Christian monastic states (p. 189). From the sacred mountain are excluded all females, including even the beasts. Hermits seem early to have gathered on the spot, then many monasteries came into being, and in

the tenth century, one bearing the honoured name of Athanasius organized the whole community on Studion lines. Thus hermits became less honoured than the cloister monks. Organized as a sort of monastic republic, the ascetic community tried to claim independence of the outside world till in 1312 the Emperor placed the *protos* of the mountain directly under the Patriarch of Constantinople.

In 1374, we first hear of the disastrous idiorrhythmic system which cuts at the very root of monastic ideals by permitting each monk to retain his property and to live as he can afford in the convent, almost as though occupying quarters in a modern apartment hotel. It has been found that under such a plan the monk will usually keep his own little garden better and do harder work than under the cœnobitic system where all are taking their part in the general community life.[20]

By the prescription of centuries, monks have at present complete control of the Eastern Church, whatever may be the eventual outcome of the movements of the present day. The fact is perhaps largely responsible for the rather sleepy and unprogressive atmosphere of Orthodox Christianity. Yet to call this ascetic community through the ages barren of all good works would be superficial and indeed libellous in the very highest degree.

Through the weary centuries of Moslem rule it was monks in no small measure that still kept hope alive in the breasts of Greek, Armenian, and Slav, and that preserved from complete extinction some lamps of Christian culture that are now again beginning to burn less murkily than they did of old. Monks again in northern Slavdom helped to preserve the spirit of Russia from being completely extinguished by the deluge of miscreant Mongols. Monasticism has shared to the full the suffering and the dogged pertinacity of the Christianity of the East.

[20] Athelstan Riley, *Athos, or the Mountain of the Monks*, p. 379.

Of the utmost value to mankind must be the system that in our own day has produced (to mention but one monk from each of the three great races that call the Orthodox Church their mother) Bryennios, the lettered Greek, who discovered the *Didache* and did much other learned work; Nikolai, the Russian bishop, who so superbly carried the Gospel to Japan and raised a great church to dominate a whole section of Tokio, its Byzantine domes seeming specially in place in that great Oriental metropolis, and another Nikolai, the saintly Bishop of Ochrida among the southern Slavs, whose preaching in the present day seems to have something of that deep Eastern mysticism that we specially associate with Christ.

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CHAPTER III

THE FIRST MONKS OF THE WEST

Were we concerned alone with monasticism on the far side of the Adriatic, it would be but an interesting phase in the long and stirring story of the Church. Secular history would be relatively but little affected. It is impossible to point to any important feature of the civilization of Greek or Slav and to say: "This would be completely other than it is but for the fostering care of the monk."

When we turn to the West, we find a different scene indeed. Monasticism has here become a mighty driving force. A culture has arisen that might not have raised its head at all, and would at least have been far different; better, perhaps, but far more likely worse but for the monks being there to Christianize the order of the earth. When Rome fell, the Christian world fell too, save where, here and there among the craggy steeps of Irish hills, or by wide peaty streams on Irish bogs, the monk still read, and wrote, and thought and taught, and that in a country where the general population has too often in every age been very differently employed.

And when at last on the European mainland a new culture, Catholic and Christian, was being reared, it was monks that laid the foundations, and by monastic hands for the most part that the glorious fabric was raised.

Monasticism in the East is a remarkable, but not an entrancingly interesting, phase in the history of the Church. Monasticism in the West was the greatest single constructive force that existed in the world for a thousand years after the fall of Rome.

Nevertheless, the first beginnings of Western monasticism appear to have been tinged with heresy. Priscillian, a Spaniard of position and wealth, about the year 375 attempted to reform the Church on lines of asceticism, but he fell into heresies of Gnostic and Manichæan character.

The Synod of Saragossa, called to deal with his errors in 380, showed itself distinctly suspicious of monasticism itself. Among other things, it was ordered that a cleric who out of pride becomes a monk, as being a better observance of the law, shall be shut out from the Church.[1] No virgin may take the veil under forty years of age.[2]

The first outstanding figure of Western monasticism is S. Basil's contemporary, the noble S. Martin (316-396), soldier-saint, monk-bishop of Tours. The great impression that he left in his own and succeeding generations is well shown by the large numbers of churches that bear his name in all parts of Western Europe, including the ancient oratory of Queen Bertha at Canterbury, the church that S. Ninian built at Candida Casa,[3] and a chapel erected by S. Benedict at Monte Cassino, besides an immense number of parish churches, particularly in England and France.

Even remote Iona has its S. Martin's Cross. His capella or little cloak was so valued a relic as to give the name of chapel to the oratory that was provided for it by the Merovingian kings. Sozomen mentions him as the earliest prominent monk among the Thracians, Illyrians, and other European nations.[4]

An admirable account, which must be called ecstatically appreciative even among ecclesiastical biographies, is contained in the "Life of St. Martin," and other works, by his younger contemporary, Sulpicius Severus, one of his closest

[1] Canon 6.
[2] Canon 8. C. J. Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church* (tr. by H. N. Oxenham), vol. ii, p. 293.
[3] See Bede, *H. E.*, bk. III, ch. iv.
[4] *Eccles. Hist.*, III, xiv.

friends. This is the original authority for the famous story of how Martin, a soldier in the service of the empire, while yet only a catechumen, divided his cloak with the beggar to whom he had nothing else to give.[5] His dream on the following night in which Christ appeared clothed in the rent garment evidently changed the whole course of his life; almost at once he left military service and devoted himself to religion.

A battle with the barbarians appeared to be imminent. Julian Cæsar (p. 46) was in the midst of his triumphant career in Gaul. He was presenting his troops with a special donation, and this was the occasion that S. Martin chose to abandon the military career. The future emperor, perhaps not unnaturally, considered the time ill-judged, and though S. Martin volunteered to expose himself in the battle, unarmed, he was thrown into prison. As the enemy, however, at the same time sued for peace, S. Martin was at once released.

However much we may sympathize with the standpoint of those who against the most discouraging odds were seeking to retrieve the fortunes of the tottering empire, Workman is perfectly right in saying that no one can read the life by Sulpicius without falling in love with its rough, tender-hearted hero.[6] S. Martin is one of the most attractive of the noble company of monastic saints, and that is saying very much.

After being admitted to the diaconate by Bishop Hilarius, S. Martin encountered roving adventures with a brigand, whom he converted, with Arian heretics by whom he was grievously ill-treated, and with the devil himself, to whom he promised salvation if only he would repent,[7] thus anticipating Robert Burns by more than fifteen hundred years.

[5] *Life*, by Sulpicius Severus, III.
[6] *Evolution of the Monastic Ideal*, p. 102.
[7] *Life*, by Sulpicius Severus, XXII. The incident is reported to have taken place after he was Bishop of Tours.

This was, however, repudiated as serious error by the great bulk of his own contemporaries.

Deciding to embrace the monastic profession as the best fulfilment of the Christian law, S. Martin founded a convent at Milan. There, as indeed wherever he went, he gained a most extraordinary reputation, and when the bishopric of Tours fell vacant "an incredible number of people not only from that town but also from the neighbouring cities had in a wonderful manner assembled to give him their votes." [8]

Unlike most monks at that early time S. Martin was already in holy orders and as bishop he continued to live his customary monastic life. Eighty other recluses dwelt with him in caves by the banks of the Loire. Many of these afterwards became bishops, "for what city or church would there be that would not desire to have its priests from among those in the monastery of Martin?" [9] It is characteristic of the whole tenor of Western monasticism that its first prominent leader was not content merely to make new records in asceticism.

S. Martin may almost be said to have set a new standard of what should be expected from a bishop. Exceedingly diligent in visiting every part of his scattered diocese he was everywhere composing quarrels, healing the sick, giving comfort to the dying. He worked all sorts of miracles by which many of the still heathen inhabitants of Gaul were converted to the faith.

With the usurping Maximus, who held his court at Trier, S. Martin was on friendly terms, but his influence was not sufficient to prevent that rude adventurer from putting Priscillian to death. He evidently admired the courage and independence of the monk who on one occasion handed a drinking cup to a priest before he passed it to the Emperor,[10] a most refreshing improvement on the shameless obsequious-

[8] *Life*, by Sulpicius Severus, IX. [9] *Ib.*, X. [10] *Ib.*, XX.

ness that so very often characterized the court prelates of the East.

We certainly get the impression, and very strongly, in reading S. Martin's life that under his inspiration monasticism was furnishing the Church with a better and far more self-denying type of priest than was usually to be found among the secular clergy of the time. Many of them appear to have been most unsatisfactory. As Sulpicius Severus says: "What power and dignity there were in Martin's words and conversation! How active he was, how practical, and how prompt and ready in solving questions connected with Scripture!" "Even when he appeared to be doing something else he still was engaged in prayer. O truly blessed man in whom there was no guile—judging no man, condemning no man, returning evil for evil to none.

"He displayed, indeed, such marvellous patience in the endurance of injuries that even when he was chief priest he allowed himself to be wronged by the lowest clerics with impunity; nor did he either remove them from office on account of such conduct, nor, so far as in him lay, repel them from a place in his affection." His very last act was to travel to Condate in order to compose the squabbles of certain contentious priests. And this good work done, he peacefully passed away among the sorrowing monks.

Sulpicius is clearly very anxious to show that in S. Martin the West had now a monk who could in every way challenge comparison with the most virile athletes of the East—though his hero was born in that portion of the empire (Pannonia). It is noteworthy as illustrating the extending respect felt for the monastic profession in itself at this time that Sulpicius [11] records that S. Martin was conscious that no such abundance of power was granted him as a bishop as he possessed while yet a simple monk.

As a monk, indeed, he is reported to have raised two peo-

[11] *Dialogues*, II, ch. iv.

ple from the dead; as a bishop only one. The general atmosphere of the "Life of Martin" is very much the same as that of S. Antony himself. Nearly all the real emphasis is on asceticism. On one occasion, seeing a green field, S. Martin was impelled to preach a little monastic sermon by comparing the beauty of the untouched grass and flowers to virginity, the parts eaten down by cattle to marriage, and the portion grubbed up by swine to fornication.[12]

S. Martin had quite as many encounters with devils as any of the ascetics of the East, but that in the West these were not taken with quite the same unquestioning faith as in the East is indicated by the matter of Brictio, a priest, who took most necessary discipline in very bad part, retorting that S. Martin "had now entirely sunk into dotage by means of his baseless superstitions and ridiculous fancies about visions."[13] To Sulpicius, S. Martin is before all things a monk, the equal in piety to any that were ever known elsewhere. To us, he is far more—one of the pioneers of the Western tradition that made monks the most practical men of affairs.

Contemporaries of S. Martin and destined to an even larger share of fame, were the two great Fathers of the Church, S. Jerome and S. Augustine. Both were monks. Both very deeply impressed their character on later monastic ideals. An order of canons and another of friars followed the Augustinian rule. The writings of S. Jerome were almost the Bible of later asceticism.

Yet Augustine, the monk, is completely overshadowed by Augustine, the theologian, the author of the "City of God." Of all the Fathers, East or West, none ever exercised quite the same influence on Christian thought. Not merely was he perhaps the chief inspiration of the mediæval school-

[12] *Dialogues*, II, ch. x.

[13] *Ib.*, III, xv. S. Martin once saved a hunted hare from the dogs in the ancient spirit of monastic sympathy with beasts, *Dialogues*, II, ix.

men, but it was to him again, far more than to any one else, that Calvin and other reformers turned. His writings are not as a general rule primarily concerned with asceticism. And yet it appears to have been monastic discipline itself that eventually turned this wandering soul, the despair of his mother, the long-time prodigal, the Manichæan hearer, into the Christian faith.

In his famous conversation with Pontitianus, a great light burst upon him. He realised that by his wonderful discipline the most common monk was able to bridle his passions in a manner that the great philosopher could not; could likewise discover a peaceful calm that was denied to one of the most brilliant scholars of his age. S. Augustine had realised in the most literal way one of the great truths of time, that in the quiet cloister spread that peace of God surpassing all understanding that the utmost treasure of this world could not give.

The famous rule of S. Augustine is based on relatively unimportant portions of his works, especially "Letter" 221, and, to a less extent, "Sermons" 355, 356. The letter is addressed to the nuns of the convent of which his sister had been Prioress; it was occasioned by noisy demonstrations of disgust with her successor, but besides reproofs, it contains much practical advice.

The life that nuns should lead is based on *Acts,* iv. 32-35, the common sharing of the early Christians.[14] Sisters who have given up great riches, and those who have in the convent the necessaries of life which they could not afford in the world, are bidden to be friendly and free from pride. "It is better to have fewer wants than larger resources. * * * Aspire to please others by your behaviour rather than by your attire. * * * Let your hair be worn wholly covered, and let it neither be carelessly dishevelled nor too scrupulously arranged when you go beyond the monastery; * * *

[14] S. Augustine, *Letter* 221, sec. 5.

neither let your desires go out to men nor wish to be the object of desires on their part." [15]

The convent has both a prioress and a prior, the latter apparently the chaplain. The nuns must honour the Prioress as a mother and "still more is it incumbent on you to obey the presbyter who has charge of you all." [16] The nuns go to the public church besides having their own oratory. Everything is to be in common, even clothes and gifts from parents. Baths are to be taken and clothes washed once a month. The washing is to be done by the religious or by washerwomen. Not less than three sisters are to go to the baths together to avoid the possibility of scandal. The letter itself is to be read once a week.[17] There will always be reading during meals.[18] Manuscripts are to be available for private study, to be changed during regular hours each day.

Unlike those of S. Augustine, the writings of S. Jerome (c. 340-420), are almost purely monastic. With his superb erudition and his most admirable translation of the Scriptures, he stands out as the great father of monastic learning, the first of the great monk-scholars that have so lavishly contributed to the knowledge of the world, and that by no means solely on the subject of monastic lore.

Born on the confines of East and West at Stridon, near Aquileia, his career belongs to both, but his point of view is unmistakably Western. He ranks as one of the four great doctors of the Latin Church. In his works, we certainly see a notable advance in the standard of the scholarship that is enlisted in the service of monasticism. He is clearly conscious of a certain lack in the literature of the desert, particularly in its eternal stories of conflict with devils.

On this subject he writes with withering scorn in a letter to Rusticus, a monk of Toulouse, whom he exhorts not to

[15] *Ib.*, secs, 9-10. [16] *Ib.*, 15. [17] *Ib.*, 16. [18] *Ib.*, 8.

become an anchorite. Writing in 411, he says: "Do I condemn a solitary life? By no means; in fact I have often commended it. But I wish to see the monastic schools turn out soldiers who have no fear of the rough training of the desert, who * * * are too conscientious to invent (as some fools do) monstrous tales of struggles with demons, designed to magnify their heroes in the eyes of the crowd and before all to extort money from it." [19]

Rusticus is advised to be diligent in gardening and other labour; likewise he is exhorted to construct a hive for bees that he may "learn from the tiny creatures how to order a monastery and to discipline a kingdom." The prophecy as to future monastic activities contained in the last four words is certainly unconscious, but we are clearly finding a new point of view from that of the desert monks.

Sadly watching the Roman world fall into ruin from his retreat at Bethlehem, not even there safe from barbarian forays, S. Jerome finds much with which to console himself in the spread of ascetic ideas. Sometimes his enthusiasm literally boils over, as when in 414, writing to Demetrias, a lady of high birth in Rome, he narrates the effects of her recently made vow of virginity: "Good Jesus! What exultation there was all through the house. * * * My words are too weak. Every church in Africa danced for joy.

"The news reached not only the cities, towns, and villages, but even the scattered huts. Every island between Africa and Italy was full of it; the glad tidings ran far and wide, disliked by none. Then Italy put off her mourning and the ruined walls of Rome resumed in part their olden splendour; * * * You would fancy that the Goths had been annihilated and that that concourse of deserters and slaves had fallen by a thunderbolt from the Lord on high.

"There was less elation in Rome when Marcellus won his first success at Nola after thousands of Romans had fallen at

[19] *Letter* CXXV, sec. 9.

the Trbeia, Lake Trasimenus, and Cannæ. There was less joy among the nobles cooped up in the Capitol, on whom the fate of Rome depended, when, after buying their lives with gold, they heard that the Gauls had at length been routed. The news penetrated to the coasts of the East, and this triumph of Christian glory was heard of in the remote cities of the interior." [20]

It is easy to smile at such flamboyant exaggeration, but yet impossible not to sympathize with S. Jerome's unlimited enthusiasm for monasticism. In fostering its growth, he was truly building far better than he knew. The glories of the monastic profession, the immeasurable superiority of celibacy to marriage, are ever his radiant themes. Indeed, he can hardly keep to any other subject for long.

It can, perhaps, hardly be claimed that his own ideals of love are high. Of the dignity and nobility of motherhood as exemplified in the old Roman matron he appears to have no conception at all. Love in its ordinary sense is for him just one of the vanities of this wicked world.

In the same letter to Demetrias he exhorts: "Avoid the company of wedded women who are devoted to their husbands and to the world, that your mind may not become unsettled by hearing what a husband says to his wife or a wife to her husband. Such conversations are filled with deadly venom." [21]

Not a few of S. Jerome's references to marriage are couched in language that to moderns seems highly indelicate. In discussing the marriage of the clergy he bases a long argument on the thesis that it is impossible for anyone living in ordinary wedlock to pray,[22] and this he treats as self-evident and gives no proof at all.

In his work on the "Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Mary" [23] he says that only in celibacy can the perfect Chris-

[20] *Letter* CXXX, sec. 6.
[21] *Ib.*, sec. 18.
[22] *Against Jovinianus*, bk. I, 34.
[23] Sec. 23.

tian life be found. "I do not deny that holy women are found both among widows and those who have husbands; but they are such as have ceased to be wives, or such as, even in the close bond of marriage, imitate virgin chastity."

S. Jerome's enthusiasm for strict monastic celibacy leads him to rather unlooked-for sympathy with many features of the non-Christian world. "Heathen errors invented the virgin goddess Minerva and Diana and placed the Virgin among the twelve signs of the Zodiac, by means of which, as they suppose, the world revolves. It is a proof of the little esteem in which they held marriage, that they did not even among the scorpions, centaurs, crabs, fishes, and Capricorn, thrust in a husband and wife." [24]

Further east he finds much satisfaction in the virgin birth of Buddha [25] (whom he calls the founder of the Gymnosophists) and on the death of an Indian he explains that the favourite wife "having put on her former dress and ornament lies down beside the corpse, embracing and kissing it, and to the glory of chastity despises the flames which are burning beneath her. I suppose that she who dies thus, wants no second marriage." [26]

To a Spaniard named Lucinius, who had vowed to live apart from his wife, he writes with characteristic enthusiasm: "You have with you one who was once your partner in the flesh but is now your partner in the spirit; once your wife but now your sister; once a woman but now a man; once an inferior but now an equal.[27]

Every verse of Scripture, if properly interpreted, shows for S. Jerome the superiority of celibacy to marriage. One might conceive difficulties in so reading the Old Testament, but S. Jerome is fully equal to the task. He begins in the

[24] *Against Jovinianus*, bk. I, sec. 41.
[25] *Ib.*, I, 42. (No such claim is made in the earliest accounts of Buddha's life.)
[26] *Ib.*, I, 44.
[27] *Letter* LXXI, sec. 3.

very first chapter of Genesis, and writing from Bethlehem in 393, or 394, to Pammachius [28] he points out that in the account of the creation concerning the work done on the second day, we are not told, as of that of the other days, that God saw that it was good. "We are meant to understand that there is something not good in the number 2, separating us as it does from unity and prefiguring the marriage tie." Many similarly convincing proofs are given from premises quite equally unpromising. Marriage is chiefly useful for bringing virgins into the world. "Virginity is to marriage what fruit is to the tree, or grain to the straw." [29] He frequently and freely admits that marriage is superior to fornication, but that without the slightest enthusiasm, and he will not go any farther.

He does not feel any responsibility for the obvious objection to his teachings, that the world would be in poor shape supposing they were seriously followed by the more civilized portion of mankind, or even if in the empire itself all the noblest and most thoughtful individuals were to refuse the responsibilities of parenthood. He does, however, say that virginity is a hard matter and therefore rare.[30]

As a hermit and recluse S. Jerome is little interested in public affairs. His few political references are by no means remarkable for their statesmanlike view. He is, of course, as conscious as his contemporaries that the Roman world is falling and the empire hopelessly doomed.

His writings are of the very greatest value as giving incidentally what is possibly the most graphic account we have of the Roman peoples during the very latest days in which the great empire remained substantially intact, yet doomed beyond any possibility of revival, but the picture is embedded in enormous accumulations of material that has far less human interest. "Every day we are being cut down by war,

[28] *Letter* XLVIII, sec. 19.
[29] *Against Jovinianus*, bk. I, sec. 3.
[30] *Ib.*, I, 36.

snatched away by disease, swallowed up by shipwreck, although we go to law about the fences of our property." [31]

It is a very rare household in which pleasure is taken in other things than "the beating of drums, the noise and clatter of pipe and lute, the clanging of cymbals," and "the half naked victims of the passions," in a luxurious atmosphere of "smooth sofas, swept pavements, flowers and feasts." [32] On one occasion when the barbarians had made Bethlehem unsafe, S. Jerome had to take refuge on shipboard, for the empire still controlled the Mediterranean.

All the more remarkable that in such an atmosphere as this the monk could make so huge a contribution to the literature of the world. As the translator of the Vulgate, and in his other learned works, S. Jerome has influenced mediæval and modern Christianity more, perhaps, than any other of the Fathers.

To the Church of Rome he has given her official version of the Scriptures. He recognized Papal claims as amply as any one could wish. The English Church has accepted as final his definition of the place of the Apocrypha. "And the other books (as Hierome saith) the church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners, but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine." [33]

Outside the Scriptures and theology, S. Jerome's knowledge was vast, though rather uncritical. Despite the vision in which he was sternly rebuked as being a follower of Cicero and not of Christ,[34] he is inclined to repudiate the common monastic doctrine that only Christian literature is fit study for Christian minds. He very often quotes the classics and displays sympathy with such Roman heroes as Cato the censor.[35]

[31] *Perpetual Virginity of Blessed Mary*, 23.
[32] *Ib.*, 22.
[33] *Article* VI. Book of Common Prayer.
[34] *Letter* XXII, sec. 30, to Eustochium, A.D. 384.
[35] *Letter* CXXX, sec. 13.

S. Jerome, in the true spirit of the monk, feels largely indifferent to the misfortunes of the world because his true home is heaven. He never dreamed that his words would reach a far distant posterity, because he had no conception that it ever would exist. In him it is impossible to feel that monasticism had yet reached a point where it could do very much for the world.

And yet his writings were destined to be classics in the monastic circles of the West, second only to Scripture and S. Benedict's rule. He would have been the very last to think that from the movement he so well loved was to rise one of the greatest and most virile constructive forces that the world has ever known, quite as powerful as the democratic tradition of Greece, as compelling in its sphere as the imperial spirit of eternal Rome.

The more we study the foundations of the building, the more we marvel that it was ever raised so high. Greece and Rome built nobly on principles universally admired; monasticism did a great work for the world in spite of every ideal with which it set out upon its way.

In all the West, in early times, no convent was more renowned than that which S. Honoratus founded in 410, during those dark days in which the legions were withdrawn from Britain and the feeble Honorius skulked amid the marshes of Ravenna instead of bravely defending the mighty battlements of Rome. The new religious house was built on an island off the Riviera coast, at Lerins, for protection from barbarian hordes.

It is characteristic of the spirit of the West that this, almost its first great monastery, at once became a centre of church life, a nursing mother of saintly bishops and pastors for the mainland, a school of Christian scholarship that did great things for the faith; not merely a place where monks wrestled with devils and saved their own souls.

S. Vincent of Lerins, the greatest ornament of that great

house (with which Cassian also was connected [36]), is of interest as the first prominent Western monastic writer, if we except Sulpicius Severus, who was of West European birth. By race he was a Gaul; of his life but little is known; his character is most charmingly and entirely unconsciously portrayed for us by himself in his setting forth of the faith known as the "Commonitorium." This admirable treatise was written "in the seclusion of a monastery situated in a remote grange," sometime between the Council of Ephesus in 431, and the death of S. Cyril of Alexandria in 444.

It is a monument of gentle reasonableness, seeking to moderate with essentially Western conciliation the furious passions which theological discussion was so apt to stir up in the turbulent councils of the East. We must take our stand, he says, on Scripture interpreted by the traditions of the Catholic Church. And this faith is that which has been believed everywhere, always and by all. We must not follow individuals, not even though it were an angel from heaven, except as we see them following the Catholic doctrine of the Church. It behooves us to have a great dread of the crime of perverting the faith and adulterating religion.[37]

Novelties must most emphatically be shunned. It is a terrible trial to the Church that Origen, the most brilliant of the Greek Fathers, and Tertullian, who among the Latins was equally distinguished, should both in different ways have erred from the purity of the faith.

Development may be allowed, but this must be as the rosebud grows into the rose; nothing must be added, nothing taken from the truth. It is right that ancient doctrines of heavenly philosophy be cared for, smoothed, polished; but

[36] Another famous Lerins monk was Lupus of Troyes, who in 429 accompanied Germanus to Britain to stamp out the Pelagian heresy. Their triumphs and the famous Halleluiah victory are detailed in Constantius' *Life of Germanus*.

[37] S. Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitorium*, 20.

not changed, nor mutilated, nor maimed. "They may receive proof, illustration, definiteness; but they must retain withal their completeness, their integrity, their characteristic properties." [38]

It is remarkable that the great name of S. Augustine is absent from S. Vincent's references to the defenders of the faith. Like others of the school of Lerins he has been accused of semi-Pelagianism, but in this direction he can hardly have gone very far, for with language more violent than is his wont he denounces "an ephemeral, moribund set of frogs, fleas, and flies such as the Pelagians." [39]

On the whole, S. Vincent's "Commonitorium" is the most profoundly reasoned discussion of the faith that the early Church has handed down, and if the happy day of Christian reunion shall ever come it is difficult to see how a more entirely satisfactory platform could possibly be devised.

It seems probable that the so-called Athanasian Creed, whose authorship is unknown, was composed by some person or persons connected with the Lerins school. This is certainly not the place to enter into the fierce controversies it has aroused, but it may be pointed out that it is a very early example of that passion of the West for exact definition of what the more cautious East preferred to treat as undefinable. The West was steeped in Roman law; the mind of the East was moulded by the philosophy of Greece. In handing religious leadership to monks both were agreed.

Thus the last dark days of the falling empire in the West were brightened by the rising light of monasticism. In the days when the ancient world of Rome was obviously nearing its end, no names shine brighter than those of monks, whether in Church or State. The secular world of their days has no leaders to place above Martin, Vincent, Cassian, Jerome, and Augustine. And when the empire had fallen and barbarian chieftains sat in the seats of the Cæsars, it was monks

[38] *Ib.*, 57. [39] *Ib.*, 26.

once more that undertook the noble task of rebuilding the civilization of the world.

Revival was not sudden, nor was it steady nor sure, but when a monk ascended the throne of S. Peter the Papacy received its brightest ornament, and modern civilization its earliest constructive statesman. True indeed it is that the career of Gregory the Great derives its chiefest interest from the picture it presents of a hero struggling against bewildering odds in the darkest ages of Europe. The dawn of the brilliance of the Middle Ages was still far off, many weary centuries of ruin had yet to be.

But Monk Gregory had lit a torch which never quite went out, and four centuries after he was dead it blazed up into one of the most brilliant cultures that the world has ever known—romantic, beautiful, and picturesque, while Christian to the core. And during early mediæval years monastic leadership was hardly called in doubt.

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Each volume contains *Prolegomena,* a very good life of the writer concerned and some account of the condition of the world at the time he lived.

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of S. Maur. It shows how completely monasticism dominates Church history in this era that very much of the work reads like a general, and not merely a monastic, record of events. Gibbon's famous Ch. xxxvii (in vol. III) of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* should be read, but not necessarily accepted as fact. Writing in the eighteenth century in a British atmosphere, seems to have been fatal to any appreciation of monasticism as a constructive force. At the end of that period Bp. Warburton could refer to "The Antiquarian, who delights to solace himself in the benighted days of monkish owl-light"; *Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Gloucester, Works,* IX, 376, and that though he might behold one of the noblest works of monks whenever he entered his own cathedral.

CHAPTER IV

S. BENEDICT

Several of the names with which we have been concerned are most prominent in the story of the Church. One or two have an assured place in the general literature of mankind. But, so far, we have not been concerned with what most historians would consent to regard as the chiefest events in the annals of the world.

It is interesting to find Abbot Butler beginning the preface to his most valuable and suggestive work on "Benedictine Monachism" with the sentences: "Violet-le-Duc has said: 'Regarded merely from the philosophical point of view, the Rule of S. Benedict is perhaps the greatest historical fact of the Middle Ages.' [1] Great authority though he was on the Middle Ages, there may be some demur in accepting this verdict."

The modesty of the ex-abbot [2] is engaging, but it hardly seems to be called for. The very shortest list of the world's great statesmen must include S. Benedict's name. He stands with Julius Cæsar as the chief moulder of one of the great civilizational organizations of past years. If we would see things in their true proportion in the light of real historical perspective—religion wholly apart—it must appear that Hannibal, or Napoleon, or even Alexander, left a smaller dent on the general story of mankind.

[1] Quoted from *Dictionnaire de l'Architecture*, I, 242.

[2] Dom. Butler was Abbot of Downside at the time he wrote the book; he has subsequently resigned.

By him a candle was lighted that was Europe's chief lantern for a thousand years, and which has never ceased to burn. Even if it be an exaggeration to say that the culture of the Middle Ages was what the Benedictines made it, no rational person will maintain that any other voice was quite so powerful as theirs—certainly none nearly so pervasive. Not an institution that stood in the Middle Ages but received much inspiration from monks; not a feature of importance in that virile civilization that would not have been vastly different but for monastic work. Yet no one ever less designed the edifice he reared. At any rate, from the standpoint of the world it was not apparent for centuries after his death that S. Benedict had done so much.

Carlyle would not let us brush away the hero with the observation that he was moulded by circumstances quite as much as he moulded them, that in fact had he not lived, another must have done substantially the very things he did. This is true enough, for if Carlyle overrated the personal force in history, others have exaggerated the economic, exceedingly great as that is.

Yet in a sense it must be admitted that this early monasticism was such a vital force, and by its very constitution in early days so far more communal than individual that, even without the guiding hand of S. Benedict, it must have produced some legislator to fit it for so great a task.

That, like many another conscientious labourer, S. Benedict built far other than he knew is not to be denied. What he essayed to do was to guide certain poor men that were tired of the world and in despair of life, to the portals of the still land beyond; what he accomplished was to train the men that should rebuild as a splendid fabric the structure of a culture that was roofless and in ruin.

Every schoolboy knows, but Columbus never did, who it was that discovered America; and so we all realize today something of S. Benedict's place in human story, but he had

not the vaguest conception of the true significance of the work he wrought.

Despite the noble work of S. Martin and Cassian and the pervading influence of the holy house of Lerins, there is much reason to believe that Western monasticism was in very sorry plight when it was brilliantly and permanently restored by the nursing hand of S. Benedict. He is one of the not inconsiderable number of men whose lives stand out in all the greater brilliance against the general darkness of the age between the fall of Rome and the rise of mediæval culture.

Born at Nursia about the year 480, just after the Goths had overthrown the last feeble representative of the greatest political tradition of mankind, S. Benedict received a good education and spent some time in Rome. It was perhaps the saddest period in the age-long story of that most famous town, and he found its atmosphere, both morally and otherwise, entirely uncongenial.

So he retreated to a lonely cavern in the district of Subiaco to live the life of a hermit. It is very safe to say that it never occurred to him that he was the destined restorer of much of the greatness of the city he had left. His severe austerities, combined with his cultured bearing, won him a multitude of friends.

As in the case of other early monks, his life was singularly unsacramental, and on one occasion it required a special miracle to let him know when it was Easter Day.

So little attention did he pay to his personal appearance that once some shepherds mistook him for a wolf and were about to try to kill him when, discovering their error, they knelt in horrified and penitent reverence, most humbly asking his pardon.

Attracted by his growing reputation, the monks of a neighbouring monastery, at Vicovaro, elected him their Abbot. His vigorous efforts to enforce a worthy discipline

were so little to their taste that they actually attempted to poison him. This miserable episode does not seem to have been particularly unique, so far from the ideals of S. Martin had the monks of the West fallen.

So S. Benedict returned to his cave. Disciples flocked around him, among the best known being S. Maur. He founded a dozen convents, but he suffered much from enemies, particularly from a secular priest.

So he turned his steps to the southward and stopped about eighty miles on the other side of Rome. Amid the battered ruins of a little hill town called Cassinum, where there are still ancient walls that antedate Latin work, he founded a convent that was destined to have a unique place among all the monasteries of the West, though in wealth and even in actual power it was to be outdistanced by abbeys in richer lands (p. 134). It was for the great house of Monte Cassino that the Rule of S. Benedict was delivered.

It is not necessary to be a monk to find in this superb piece of writing something that is not to be discovered in any other work of the authors of the early Church. Our Holy Father, as Benedictines love to call their pious founder, displays an honest friendliness and a spirit of reasonableness that are really exceedingly attractive. Though it is, of course, written entirely for monks, it seems to have a message for all.

The Rule is exceedingly ingenuous and simple. S. Benedict is perfectly unconscious that he is legislating for a new world. He simply desires that, persisting in His teaching in the monastery till death, he and the other monks may by patience share in the sufferings of Christ and deserve to be partakers in His kingdom.[3] As James Hannay has put it: "The Benedictine rule aimed at making good men and left the question of their usefulness to God; it is, perhaps, just

[3] Prologue to the *Rule*.

because they denied themselves the satisfaction of aiming at usefulness that they were so greatly used."

It is often stated that the Rule was planned purely for the abbey of Monte Cassino and that it was merely because of its intrinsic excellence that it spread so far beyond. This may be the case, but the provision in Chapter IV about clothing being given to the brethren suited to the climate of the place where they are, appears to indicate that a wider use was contemplated.

S. Benedict begins by enumerating four different sorts of monks, and of the first two classes he expresses like S. Basil, a strong preference for cœnobites over hermits. Sarabites, who live by twos and threes, he strongly condemns, accurately foreseeing, what bishops' registers a thousand years later amply confirm, that very small monasteries were apt to become corrupt (p. 242). Two or three monks living together are far more likely tacitly to agree to modify the rule than a community of a dozen or more.

Gyratory monks, or monastic tramps, sponging on the hospitality of one religious house after another, come in for yet stronger strictures, and quite equally deserved. There may have been good men among them, but as a class they were singularly worthless. After describing them as spending their time wandering about, with no stability, given up to their own pleasures and to the snares of gluttony, S. Benedict remarks that it is better to say no more of their wretched lives. S. Benedict as a monastic reformer certainly did not appear before he was needed.

The abbot must do nothing of importance without calling the whole house together and hearing what each has to say (p. 190). The chapter house was to be one of the greatest of monastic institutions.[4]

[4] The word "chapter" is familiar to Americans from its use by various academical societies, particularly the Phi Beta Kappa. It is used of the clergy of a cathedral as well as of the monks of a convent in council.

Obedience must be strict. "Therefore let all, straightway leaving their own affairs and giving up their own will, with unoccupied hands and leaving incomplete what they were doing—the foot of obedience being foremost—follow with their deeds the voice of him who orders."

Night office is to be said and also the other canonical hours. These frequent services all through the day, consisting very largely of singing the Psalms of David, have always been the main occupation of the monk. The entire psalter is to be said weekly, beginning on Sunday at vigils.

There are to be deans to assist the abbot, "elected according to merit of life and advancement in wisdom." (The dean is properly the tenth man but through monasticism the term has come to be used in many other senses, particularly in colleges.)

Monks are to have separate beds, all, if possible, in one cell. A candle is to burn there all night, all are to sleep in their clothes girt with belts, but without their knives for fear of accidents. (In all mediæval monasteries, with hardly an exception, the dormitory was a long gallery with a door into the church for the convenience of the monks attending the night office.)

The cellarer is to be "wise, mature in character, sober, not given to much eating, not proud, not turbulent, not an upbraider, not tardy, not prodigal, but fearing God; a father, as it were, to the whole congregation. He shall take care of everything, he shall do nothing without the order of the abbot. * * * To the brethren he shall offer the fixed measure of food without any haughtiness or delay, in order that they be not offended." The abbot must keep a list of all the property of the house.

A monk "should have absolutely not anything; neither a book, nor tablets, nor a pen—nothing at all. For indeed it is not allowed to the monks to have their own bodies or wills in their power."

"The brothers shall so serve each other in turn that no one shall be excused from the duty of cooking, unless either through sickness, or because he is occupied in some important work of utility.

"Before all, and above all, attention shall be paid to the care of the sick, * * * and for these infirm brothers a cell by itself shall be set apart. * * * The use of baths shall be offered to the sick as often as it is necessary; to the healthy, and especially to youths, it shall not be so readily conceded." The infirmaries are usually important and singularly well arranged parts of mediæval monasteries. Probably few laymen got as good care in sickness. In this as well as in their sanitary arrangements the monks were pioneers.

Nothing can better illustrate the power of the Christian Church about the time of S. Benedict than the fact that it was able to abolish an institution so well established in the life of the Roman world as the bath. Travelling in remote parts of Italy today one often feels that if an ancient Roman were to return to the scenes that once he knew, the absence of the public baths would impress him more than almost anything else.)

"At the tables of the brothers when they eat the reading shall not fail; nor may any at random dare to take up the book and read there; but he who is about to read for the whole week shall begin his duties on Sunday; * * * he shall receive bread and wine before he begins to read.

"We believe, moreover, that for the daily refection of the sixth as well as the ninth hour two cooked dishes * * * are enough for all tables." "Indeed we read that wine is not suitable for monks at all. But because in our day it is not possible to persuade the monks of this, let us agree at least as to the fact that we should not drink till we are sated, but sparingly.

"As soon as the signal for the hour of divine service has been heard, leaving everything that they have in hand, the

monks shall run with the greatest haste; with gravity, however, in order that scurrility may find no nourishment.

"Idleness is the enemy of the soul. And, therefore, at fixed hours, the brothers ought to be occupied in manual labour; and again at fixed times in sacred reading.

"The oratory shall be that which it is called; nor shall anything else be done or placed there." (This rule is taken from Letter 221, sec. 7, of S. Augustine. He tells us the reason—that the chapel might ever be available for private prayer. Churches during the Middle Ages were frequently used for purposes of all kinds; an interesting relic is the case of certain academic functions that still take place in the university churches at Oxford and Cambridge.)

"All guests who come shall be received as though they were Christ. * * * The kitchen of the abbot and the guests shall be by itself; so that guests coming at uncertain hours, as is always happening in a monastery, may not disturb the brothers.

"The table of the abbot shall always be with the guests and pilgrims. As often, however, as guests are lacking, it shall be in his power to summon those of the brothers whom he wishes." (Thus the *Rule* itself contemplates a position for the abbot that prepared the way for his very extensive outside activities. In most important houses the abbot had a separate residence and there was also a "guesten" hall. When the abbot had to undertake many duties as a great feudal lord, he was often away from his convent for long periods, and under the evil commendatory system ceased to have any real connexion with it at all.)

No monk may receive a letter or any gift except through the abbot, and he may give it to any other monk than the one to whom it is addressed.

"When any newcomer applies for conversion,[5] an easy

[5] This is the common technical word for becoming a religious; that is, member of some religious order.

entrance shall not be granted him; * * * if he who comes perseveres in knocking, and is seen after four or five days patiently to endure the insults inflicted upon him, and the difficulty of ingress, and to persist in his demand, entrance shall be allowed him." He must remain for all his life in the same monastery. (This constitutes S. Benedict's ideal of stability, a most marked improvement on the restlessness that monks had too often displayed.)

"At the door of the monastery shall be placed a wise old man who shall know how to receive a reply and to return one; whose ripeness of age will not permit him to trifle.

"A monastery, moreover, if it can be done, ought so to be arranged that everything necessary—that is, water, a mill, a garden, a bakery—may be made use of, and different arts be carried on, within the monastery; so that there shall be no need for the monks to wander about outside." (This was usually managed in the case of large houses in the country. Inevitably changes had to be made when it became common that Benedictine houses should be situated in cities.)

Artificers may, with the abbot's permission, practise their art, but if they think they do it very well they must be put to some other work. Articles so made by the monks may be sold. "In the prices themselves, moreover, let not the evil of avarice crop out; but let the object always be given a little cheaper than it is supplied by other and secular persons; so that in all things God may be glorified."

Such are the main outlines of a simple but extraordinarily well thought out Rule. Very much is based on the work of former monastic legislators; there is no striving whatever after originality. S. Benedict, however, brings to the task the organizing ability of Rome. The Abbot's rule is based upon the *patria potestas,* and the rule about stability makes each abbey a permanent family whose members are removable only by death, at least in all ordinary circumstances.

Thus good order takes the place of the indescribable chaos that had too often reigned before. An exceedingly important contribution in the days when the degenerate world of Rome wished to relegate all work to slaves is the insistence, in the true spirit of a Ruskin, upon the dignity of manual toil—*"laborare est orare."*

It was inevitable that ascetic communities practising such a rule should evolve an efficiency of a high order, but nothing was ever less designed than the monument to the wisdom of their holy Father that the Benedictines erected through many centuries. As Abbot Butler expresses it: "How far have Benedictine history and work in the world, and, it may be said, Benedictine ideas, gone beyond anything that can have been in St. Benedict's mind.

"How little he thought that his monks were to be apostles, missionaries, civilizers, schoolmasters, editors of the Fathers. How surprised would he have been at the figure of a mediæval mitred abbot, a feudal baron, fulfilling the functions of a great landlord and of a statesman. How bewildering to him would have been the gorgeous church functions and the stately ceremonial that have become one of the most cherished traditions among his sons." [6]

It is remarkable that with all his Roman taste for organization S. Benedict made no effort to set up a regular order according to the traditions of Pachomius, nor sought in any way to bind his other monasteries to Monte Cassino. Each convent of his disciples is independent under its own abbot, a separate family with only fraternal relations with the other Benedictine houses.

The common sense and inherent excellence of the Rule caused it eventually to oust all others throughout the West. Particularly after a few centuries it superseded the far more rigid, but less well-ordered Celtic Rules, especially that of Columbanus (p. 179). As Dr. Workman remarks: this

[6] *Hibbert Journal*, 1906, p. 490.

"simply bristles with punishments." [7] None knew better than S. Benedict that the furious ascetic records of the childhood of monasticism could not possibly be maintained throughout the centuries. Of all possible monastic Rules none is less ascetic than his own.

Abbot Butler points out that "the general conditions of life were probably not rougher or harder than would have been the lot of most of the monks had they remained in the world." [8] This undoubtedly is true through the ages. From *Domesday* statistics F. W. Maitland calculated that a monk drank on an average at least a gallon of beer every day,[9] and there is certainly no evidence that the amount grew subsequently less. It required the vigorous insistence of William the Conqueror to force his monks to erect their house on the ridge at Battle instead of in a balmier spot lower down. Innumerable other instances might be given.

Despite far less spectacular beginnings, Western monasticism was nevertheless destined to reach an incomparably higher standard of value than was ever attained in the East. Far more impressive than Benedictine austerities have been Benedictine services to mankind.

Yet all this glory has been called by Benedictines themselves "by-products." However great, however long drawn out, perhaps, after all, this work for the world was only a passing phase. It is certainly impressive to find Abbot Delatte writing: "Save in cases of necessity—and superiors should strive prudently to reduce their number—we have no reason to meddle with apostolic works, social questions, or politics. St. Benedict has bidden us only employ the tools of the spiritual craft, and these in the cloister." [10]

One of the best known of living French monks, in fact, bids his Benedictine brethren forget the history of a dozen

[7] *Evolution of the Monastic Ideal*, p. 207.
[8] *Benedictine Monachism*, p. 32.
[9] *Domesday Book and Beyond*, p. 440.
[10] *Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict*, p. 82, English edition.

centuries and return to the simple ideals with which the great order began its long career.

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These authors approach the subject from widely different points of view.

Abbot Delatte's *Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict,* is a work of much charm, remarkable for its views of abbatial absolutism. The author shows very little interest in the history of the order. This work contains the whole of the *Rule,* which is in part printed in many source books of mediæval history.

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CHAPTER V

MONK REBUILDERS OF A WORLD

When in 590 S. Gregory the Great was forced to leave his much loved convent of S. Andrew on the Cœlian Hill and to mount the Papal chair, his own peace of mind may have suffered very much—as he tells us it did—but one of the greatest of all its traditions was given to the world.

It was shown that in the studious recesses of the cloister there had been evolved a new efficiency that the outside world of the ruined empire had long ceased to know. Not that S. Gregory had no other background himself. Born of a patrician family, he had served the State with honour and held the high office of prefect of Rome. But it is as a monk, and that a sterling good one, that he figures in the story of the world. A monk, rich indeed in experience, but destitute of material force, displayed an organizing power in purely secular affairs that few of the world's great statesmen have excelled.

Dark days indeed for Europe were in store and the dawn of the real cultural revival of the Middle Ages was centuries away. But S. Gregory had made a beginning of better things. At least he showed Europe whence her rebuilding was to come. Unlike the earlier doctors of the Western Church (Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome), he had no classical background. As a Christian and a monk [1] he faces the

[1] I cannot accept modern doubts as to whether S. Gregory was a monk. As well might we discuss the problem as to whether Napoleon was a soldier. His whole soul was monastic.

future. In all the learning of the past he sees nothing but pagan darkness.

It was from a quarter so unexpected that the new order was to come that contemporaries could hardly be expected to realize that the cloister rather than the court, the recluse rather than the man of affairs, was to raise up the civilization to be. The like had never been before. The general trend of earlier monasticism had not been very constructive.

But as Professor Foakes Jackson points out: "A new spirit had come into the world which completely changed the old order. With the cessation of persecution the monastic movement had begun: and of the Middle Ages it may be said that everybody was a monk at heart, in the sense that no man was so usefully employing his life for the benefit of others but he acknowledged that the summons of the monastery or of the hermit's cell was a call to better things, and even sinners believed that repentance could most surely be found in the self-torture of solitary asceticism. To all men the monastic life represented the highest goal on this earth." [2]

It can hardly be too strongly emphasized that while severe mortification was indeed the keynote of Oriental monasticism, the monks of the West almost at once took their place as practical men of affairs. They did not claim that tremendous self-denial with which they have not infrequently been credited. At any rate, in all ages we have plentiful disclaimers.

The religious were always very fully conscious of the worries and anxieties of married life from which their own profession set them free. There have ever been monks and nuns avowing themselves what we should now call confirmed bachelors, who rather looked with compassion on the woes, than with envy on the delights, of married life.

S. Jerome speaks in his famous letter to Eustochium about

[2] *An Introduction to the History of Christianity*, A.D. 590-1314, p. 4.

"the drawbacks of marriage, such as pregnancy, the crying of infants, the torture caused by a rival, the cares of household management, and all those fancied blessings which death at last cuts short." [3] This is all the more striking because the context is the proper motives for taking the vow of virginity. In the twelfth century, we have the remarkable Norman Prior's door in Ely Cathedral, which displays a satire on wedded life, beginning with an affectionate pair kissing, and ending with their sitting in the same boat, one rowing, the other backing.

A well-known story of S. Francis of Assisi records his making a wife and children and servants of snow and then congratulating himself that if he serves God alone he will be free from all the anxieties and cares of providing clothes and other necessities for such a household.[4]

The same ideas are expressed with yet more pungent satire in "Holy Maidenhood," a work of the thirteenth century: "And how, I ask, though it may seem odious, how does the wife stand, who, when she comes in hears her child scream, sees the cat at the flitch, and the hound at the hide? Her cake is burning on the stone hearth, her calf is sucking up the milk, the earthen pot is overflowing into the fire, and the churl is scolding. Though it be an odious tale, it ought, maiden, to deter thee more strongly from marriage, for it does not seem easy to her who has tried it. Thou, happy maiden, who hast fully removed thyself out of that servitude as a free daughter of God and as His Son's spouse, needest not suffer anything of the kind." [5] And we have the

[3] *Letter* XXII, sec. 2.

[4] Thomas of Celano, Leg. II, ch. 82. S. Bonaventura, *Legendæ duæ de Vita S. Francisci*, chap. v, sec. 4. (Quaracchi ed., p. 48.) A similar story, but with mud instead of snow, will be found in *Verba Seniorum*, auctore probabili Ruffino Aquileiensi presbytero, printed in Migne, P. L. 73, col. 747 (copy).

[5] *Hali Meidenhad*, edit. Cockayne, Early English Text Society, 1866, p. 37. The author is unknown.

testimony of a modern abbot that Benedictine life at the present day is not one of great austerity.[6]

S. Gregory the Great was certainly under no delusions whatever as to the real condition of the Roman world. In reply to a letter of congratulation on his election as Pope he wrote to John the Faster, Patriarch of Constantinople: "It is evident that you do not love me as yourself, seeing that you have wished me to take on myself that load which you were unwilling should be imposed on you. But since I, unworthy and weak, have taken charge of an old and grievously shattered ship (for on all sides the waves enter, and the planks, battered by a daily and violent storm, sound of shipwreck), I beseech thee by Almighty God to stretch out the hand of thy prayer" [7]—since at Constantinople he can pray in peace.

Nothing stands out more clearly than the fact that this government of the world was not sought by the quiet cloister, but in the first place, at any rate, forced upon its reluctant inmates. To Narses, the Patrician, S. Gregory writes: "In describing the sweetness of contemplation, you have renewed the groans of my fallen state, since I hear what I have lost inwardly while mounting outwardly, though undeserving, to the topmost height of rule.

"Know then that I am stricken with so great sorrow that I can scarcely speak. * * * For I reflect to what a dejected height of external advancement I have mounted in falling from the lofty height of my rest." [8] To the Emperor's sister he writes in the same terms. In many places in his writings S. Gregory displays a longing for the quiet peace of the cloister as far superior to the turmoil of the world. He feels

[6] See the very interesting ch. xxii in Abbot Butler's *Benedictine Monachism.* He virtually says that sound scholarship is far better worth seeking to attain than any great asceticism. Incidentally he gives one a very great respect for his own character.

[7] *Epistles of St. Gregory the Great,* bk. I, *Ep.* iv.

[8] *Ib., Ep.* vi.

that he has left a delightful haven to be tossed about on the stormy waves of an uncongenial sea.

S. Gregory sought neither the Papacy nor temporal power. Both were forced upon him by the absence of any possible alternative. No real administration of Italy was to be expected from the feeble Exarch at Ravenna, the pale representative of the once powerful Emperor. S. Gregory alone was in a position to do something—and it was not very much—to restore some semblance of ordered life. Despite the fact that, as his own letters show, the state of the Western monasteries left something to be desired, S. Gregory's policy was as far as possible to use the monks both to restore prosperity to what remained of the empire and to extend the Gospel among the barbarians (p. 177).

The smallest matters, such as the rights of individual peasants on Church lands, received his closest attention. For the development of the huge estates that belonged to him, especially in Sicily, he provided by the foundation of monasteries. In the extreme uncertainty of those unhappy times when Lombards, as yet untutored,[9] were making havoc of Italy, and other barbarians of all sorts were tearing away so many provinces of the empire, few ordinary laymen possessed the energy or the confidence to seek to repair the damages of devastating wars. Whether the spiritual children of S. Benedict soared so very far above the general level of the secular clergy in pure morality is a far more arguable thing than the fact that they were now the chief rebuilders of Western Europe.

It was largely because the monks, and they alone, possessed the skill, the capital, the organization, and the faith in the future to undertake large projects of reclamation

[9] Few, or none, foresaw at that time how great things the "unspeakable" race was eventually to accomplish through its very presence, a vigorous northern brood of tremendous virility and energy on the northern plains of Italy. For centuries their descendants have been chief leaders in Italian progress.

over fields long desolated by the slave system of Roman villa life and later the tramp and retramp of barbarian hordes.

The times were so disturbed that secular men might well hesitate to sow the crops whose fruits they might never see, but the monks' real home was heaven, and if all the founders of a monastery were dead there would be others to take their places. They could carry on agricultural and other works upon a scale absolutely beyond the reach of the wealthiest individual. Immense tracts of barren heath and of water-soaked fen were by monastic hands turned into excellent agricultural land. Many a great abbey, such as S. Benet, Holm, in Norfolk, which stands today amid smiling fields and rich cornlands, was built originally on the self-same spot in the centre of barren desolation.

It is impossible to conceive any agents better qualified to restore cultivation and the arts of peace to the desolated European world than the ascetic communities who might bring to the task the organization of numbers, the enthusiasm of religion, and the feeling that it was no matter how long their schemes of betterment might take to come to maturity, because their monasteries could never die.

As Newman expresses it: "St. Benedict found the world, physical and social, in ruins; and his mission was to restore it in the way, not of science, but of nature, not as if setting about to do it, not professing to do it by any set time or by any rare specific or by any series of strokes, but so quietly, patiently, gradually, that often, till the work was done, it was not known to be doing. It was a restoration, rather than a visitation, correction, or conversion.

"The new world which he helped to create was a growth rather than a structure. Silent men were observed about the country, or discovered in the forest, digging, clearing, and building; and other silent men, not seen, were sitting in the cold cloister, tiring their eyes, and keeping their attention

on the stretch, while they painfully deciphered and copied and re-copied the manuscripts which they had saved.

"There was no one that 'contended or cried out,' or drew attention to what was going on; but by degrees the woody swamp became a hermitage, a religious house, a farm, an abbey, a village, a seminary, a school of learning, and a city. Roads and bridges connected it with other abbeys and cities, which had similarly grown up; and what the haughty Alaric or fierce Attila had broken to pieces, these patient, meditative men had brought together and made to live again." [10]

There are many European towns which originally grew up around monasteries. Most of them are relatively small, but a few, such as Peterborough, England, have grown into big cities.

S. Gregory the Great had turned into a convent his ancestral palace upon the Cœlian, and there he himself dwelt as a monk, finding such a life extremely congenial. He dedicated the place to S. Andrew, but it now bears his own name and is known as S. Gregorio.

When in 581 the Lombards plundered Monte Cassino, the monks came flying to Rome and founded another house by the Cathedral of Rome, the Lateran Basilica. Either from their example or independently, and perhaps before they arrived, S. Gregory established the Benedictine rule in his own abbey on the Cœlian Hill. It is obvious, however, that the rule must have been modified, at any rate in some degree, for a convent in the middle of a city (p. 82).

The work of S. Gregory was never lost, but after he had passed away, the European world was in little better state than it had been before. From the barbarians themselves there came the next great rebuilder of the West. Charles the Great (Charlemagne), brilliantly restored the empire, and his coronation at Rome on Christmas day, 800 A.D., was

[10] *Mission of S. Benedict*, sec. 9, in *Historical Sketches*, II, p. 410.

the virtual foundation of the great structure of mediævalism. The new empire, holy and Roman, that was set up that day lasted in fact till the time of the Renaissance (when Charles V was the last sovereign who was really in any sense the ruler of Europe), and in theory till it was ended by Napoleon,[11] in 1806.

It was again very largely to monks that Charles the Great had recourse in his civilizing work for the world. Einhard, his friend and biographer, had been educated in the convent of Fulda and was ever a great admirer of monasticism. In old age he himself took the vows. Other prominent courtiers were the sovereign's cousin, Adalhard, the Abbot of Corbey, and Angilbert, another monk who took the part of Homer when the denizens of the palace at Aachen each acted the part of some ancient worthy, the sovereign himself being King David. Alcuin, on whom he chiefly relied for his educational reforms, does not appear to have been a professed monk, but he owed everything to the monastically inspired culture of his native Northumbria. Charles made him Abbot of Tours, but this may have been an early example of that commendatory system that was afterwards to prove a chief solvent of monasticism.

One of Charles' soldiers had his mind so turned to sacred things by a narrow escape from drowning that he became a monk. In religion he is known as Benedict of Aniane, from a monastery that he founded in a gorge above that river in Aquitaine. Louis the Pious, on his succession to his father's dominion, invited him to the capital and made him abbot of a monastery close by.

S. Benedict presided over the council of Aachen (817) which was largely concerned with much needed reform of monastic discipline. He had been so perfectly appalled by

[11] The matter was complicated but this is substantially true, though barons of the Holy Roman Empire still exist, and the title "Emperor of Austria" had been substituted for the higher one a little before 1806.

the conditions that confronted him that he contemplated re-introducing the strict discipline of the East. The council, however, under his guidance, turned in the more hopeful direction of a restoration of the Benedictine Rule. Attempts were also made to impose upon all the clergy some rule based upon Chrodegang's reforms (p. 96). Imperial inspectors were to be charged with the duty of enforcing a cast-iron uniformity upon all monasteries, a strange new departure that very soon passed away.

Undoubtedly something was accomplished, but as the work of the great Charles was undone by the relative feebleness of his successors, it was not easy for the cloister to rise entirely superior to the disorders of the world. However much corruption there may have been, we hear nothing of any decay of monastic energy. The foundation of the great house of Cluny in 910 (p. 123) was to bring most vigorous new life.

Monks were constantly finding new methods of serving the world.

One of the very greatest works performed by Rome had been the building of that net of splendid roads that gave relatively easy communication throughout the whole extent of the empire. Many of the old imperial highways still formed the chief thoroughfares of Europe, but the system naturally fell to pieces as a result of barbarian invasion. Many of the mediæval travellers were pilgrims and the monks were soon keenly interested in providing for keeping open communications.

Conspicuous in this work was S. Bernard of Menthon who in 962 built a hospice amid the Alpine snows for the benefit of travellers on the great roads into Italy. The dogs that bear his name still commemorate his methods of bringing first aid to those who had been overcome with fatigue.

But while it was chiefly instrumental in moulding the whole civilization of the West during the early mediæval

period, it is remarkable that monasticism did not dominate, nor identify itself with, the official Church as was coming to be the case in the East. The houses of the monastic orders, though nearly always subject to the bishops, formed as a rule no part of the diocesan and parochial system of the Church.

Secular and regular clergy had their own separate organizations which met only in the sovereign pontiff himself. It is true indeed that the monks were gradually ceasing as a rule to be laymen. Abbot Butler believes that about the tenth century the custom became established that monks should be ordained, and this led to their abandoning work in the fields for more sedentary occupations.[12] At an earlier period it seems to have become the custom that the abbot should be ordained, and if the head of the convent was a layman he was merely called the prior. There is a letter from S. Gregory the Great to the Bishop of Naples directing that for the present a certain monk, Barbatianus by name, shall be Prior of a convent not named. He suffers unfortunately from being "exceedingly wise in his own conceit," but has "good qualities that commend him." If the Bishop finds him worthy he is to ordain him Abbot, otherwise to defer his ordination and report to Rome.[13] Of course this may have been exceptional, but the context seems rather to show that an abbot was ordained as a matter of course.

But even when ordained, monks as a rule did not minister to laymen. The parish churches which architecturally formed part of the monasteries and those that were appro-

[12] *Benedictine Monachism*, p. 294. The question is discussed at some length and the statement is made on the authority very largely of Edmund Bishop.

[13] *Epistles*, bk. IX, *Ep.* xci. An abbot is the head of an abbey, the prior usually his second in command. In the case of a cathedral convent usually the bishop was titular abbot, the actual head being a prior in title, but an abbot in dignity. The Prior of Canterbury was mitred and sat in Parliament (p. 194). Usually a priory was a house of less dignity than an abbey.

priated to religious houses were served by secular priests, and if monks became dignitaries of the Church their relations with their old orders became nominal.

But to all such generalizations there are frequently important exceptions and, especially in countries converted by the monks, the monastic and secular organizations were apt to get partially interlaced. In England about half the cathedrals were also monastic churches and in Scotland and Ireland there were several similar instances. Monastic cathedrals on the Continent were more rare, but the noble Benedictine church at Monreale (Sicily) has been the cathedral of a diocese since 1174, and during 1371 the Abbot of Monte Cassino became bishop of a large diocese formed by the Pope by the federation of several others. The conventual church is the cathedral, but if the abbot is not in episcopal orders the duties have, of course, in part to be performed by a deputy. German monastic (Premonstratensian) cathedrals were Lübeck, Brandenburg, Havelburg and Ratzeburg.

On the whole, however, during the earlier Middle Ages the monk as such took little direct part in the actual routine work of the civilization that he did so much to mould. Rather he directed from outside. But this was not to be permanent.

Feeling that monks were apt to have far greater earnestness than the secular clergy, Chrodegang, Archbishop of Metz, cousin and minister to Pepin, the first of the long line of ecclesiastical statesmen, tried to impose a rule upon all his clergy. He thus became to some degree a pioneer in the West of bringing the monk as such into the service of the Church. He succeeded permanently in separating canons who met in their chapter houses and were bound to chastity and obedience, but not to poverty,[14] from the ordinary parochial clergy.

[14] That is, they might hold private property.

A semi-monastic body of clergy [15] was not yet, however, destined to appear. Canons themselves came to be either secular, serving a cathedral or collegiate church, or else monastic, belonging to definite orders such as the Augustinian, founded about 1080 by S. Ivo of Chartres, which followed the rule of S. Augustine (p. 62), or the Premonstratensian, founded by S. Norbert in 1120, at a little place near Laon, called Premontré.

In the case of these orders all the brethren must be clergy and they were sometimes expected to preach and, though rarely, to exercise cure of souls like ordinary parish priests. Even so, however, the religious were not very anxious to identify themselves with the work of the church itself; in England, out of two hundred and fifty-four Augustinian churches, only thirty-seven were parochial.[16] Still, such orders did very definitely establish the principle that the whole duty of a religious is not to save his own soul.

Mediævalism, through its whole history, retained the stamp of its monastic origin, in its superb and lofty idealism. It devoted itself to a serious attempt, and the only one in history that ever was made, to Christianize the order of the world. This, of course, is not to say that the period was morally better or perhaps even more religious than any other, but law, politics, and social institutions were definitely based upon what the Middle Ages saw as distinctly Christian principles. In Geneva, New England, Scotland, and elsewhere there have been indeed in later days rather short-lived efforts to Christianize the order of a city, or a province, or a state, but, so far, hardly of the world itself.

[15] Such as the Eudists, in much later times.

[16] Rev. J. Hodson, *Archæological Journal*, (London) vols. xli-xlii. The canons served Carlisle Cathedral. The other English monastic cathedrals (Canterbury, Rochester, Winchester, Worcester, Ely, Norwich, Durham, Bath, and Coventry, now destroyed), were all Benedictine. The Augustinian order was introduced into England by Matilda, daughter of S. Margaret, and wife of Henry I. Gregor Mendel belonged to it in later times.

During the mediæval period, moral values were preferred to material, at least to a far greater degree than in the earlier days of Greece and Rome or the later ones of the Renaissance. An enormous proportion of communal energy and wealth was devoted to building those glorious cathedrals, abbeys, and churches that to the majority of cultured travellers are the chief glory of Europe today.

Even so, however, nothing but ignorance of mediæval documents can excuse the impression that the average man of those days was better or happier than he is at present. Some of the grandest parts of the great Benedictine Cathedral at Durham were built by Flambard, who did so much to enhance the tyranny of John, the vilest minister indeed of England's vilest king.

It is a remarkable tribute to mediæval monasticism that it seems never to have been conscious of the magnificent work it was doing for the world. Monastic literature nowhere, apparently, displays any pride in the secular activity of the monks, and there is much to show the survival of the old Egyptian tradition.

Cæsarius of Heisterbach (b. 1180, probably in Köln), tells of a priest who entered his monastery and then proposed to leave it again to serve his parish in Alsace or to attend to the duties of his prebend at Köln, but he was told most definitely that all such ideas came from the fiend. The cloister life was more pleasing to God than any good service to the world, and to return to the work even of an ideal secular priest would be to risk salvation itself.[17] This is indeed the universal view.

The European unity of the Middle Ages, which was in great part at least the work of monks, left no room for nations with their senseless animosities, that bane of recent years. Christendom was one. Churchmen might hold office

[17] *Cæsarius*, I, 215, quoted by Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, I, 352.

under any sky. In the thirteenth century one Albert was Archbishop, first of Armagh in Ireland and then of Livonia (p. 120). Chaucer's monk had fought in Egypt, Prussia, Latvia, Russia, Armenia, and Spain, and always in the same Christian cause. The great mediæval orders had their houses in all parts of Europe and as a rule knew no distinction of people or of race.[18]

The Pope was the universal priest, the Emperor the universal monarch. No ecclesiastic could be independent of the former; no secular ruler might challenge in theory at any rate the world-supremacy of the latter. The ideal is majestically set forth in the famous painting on the east wall of the Spanish chapel of the Dominican church of S. Maria Novella at Florence, where Pope and Emperor sit on twin thrones supported by all the orders of the Church and of chivalry. Dante, in the magnificent language of his "De Monarchia," sets forth the same great conception of the world-wide empire with its gift of universal peace.

Doubtless the actual results came very far short of the ideal, but one comes across recognition of it in all sorts of mediæval by-ways. S. Francis of Assisi, though of course an Italian, desired that he might see the Emperor in order to ask him entreatingly and persuasively to issue a decree against catching his sisters the larks. The whole conception of the Holy Roman Empire is set out on the (fifteenth century) roof of the cathedral in far-off Aberdeen.

The Middle Ages had a proverb: "When anything is to be done in the world a monk must be in it, were it only as a painted figure." [19]

[18] A sad exception to this was a statute passed by a Parliament at Kilkenny in 1310, prohibiting the Irish convents from taking neophites who were not of English blood. But this was later reversed. Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, 100, Stuart, *Armagh*, 115-116.

[19] Quoted by Luther: Dedicatory letter to *Address to the German Nobility.*

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Far more is to be gathered from the fourteen books of the *Epistles of S. Gregory,* which are printed (in selection) in vols. XII and XIII, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* with his *Pastoral Rule.* There is a good brief account of his life. Excellent English accounts of Gregory are given in Rev. H. K. Mann's *Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages,* vol. I, Pt. I; and Hodgkin's *Italy and her Invaders,* bk. VI, chh. vii-x; and for Charles the Great, *Ib.,* bk. VIII, chh. xi-xiv; bk. IX.

For the central ideal of the Middle Ages of course Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire* is absolutely indispensable.

In addition to books already cited Foakes Jackson's *Introduction to the History of Christianity,* A.D. 590-1314, and the chapter on *The Monk a Civilizer,* in Charles Kingsley's *The Roman and the Teuton.*

CHAPTER VI

CELTIC MONASTICISM

By monks, too, in a remote island of Europe was being preserved and developed a culture, magnificent, yet strangely unequal, that might have given the Irish race, supposing they had been endowed with organizing power, a world place comparable to that of Rome.

Irish Christianity was even more monastic in character than that of the continent of Europe. Elsewhere the Church was organized by dioceses whose boundaries were fixed and whose areas had been moulded very largely by the political arrangements of Rome. But in Ireland we read far more of monasteries than of dioceses, and though the episcopal system was necessarily maintained, the abbot appears in many cases to be more important than the bishop, while the limits of dioceses and even their seats were constantly getting changed.

There is excellent evidence that many, at any rate of the most characteristic features of ancient Irish monasticism were derived from the East. The common interlacing patterns of the Celts were copied from characteristic Byzantine forms; the description of the church at Kildare in Cogitosus' (ninth century) "Life of S. Bridget" with its numerous screens to separate the sexes, its eikonostasis, its painted pictures and jewelled ornaments pendant from the roof, exactly suggests a Coptic church of today.[1]

The common practice of fasting on a debtor, not at all

[1] See my article on *Some Irish Religious Houses* in the *Archæological Journal* (London), vol. lxxii, pp. 89-134, June, 1915, pt. 286.

infrequently mentioned in the Irish records (well known as far east as China), the belief in reincarnation, the numerous little chapels in place of large churches, the flabellum (or fly brush), in the "Book of Kells" portrait of S. Matthew, all show Oriental influence, while the Irish Easter, though peculiar to the Celtic Church, was almost certainly derived originally from the East. But Irish Christianity had very definite features of its own and was far from being a mere reproduction of the Eastern Church.

An Irish monastery consisted as a rule of a number of huts where the recluses lived, with stone chapels where they prayed, defended by a rampart of earth or stones against the lawless world outside. Very many of the chapels can still be seen, though most of them are now roofless ruins. It is strange that during many centuries of early Christian history (perhaps from the fifth to the ninth), there was preserved in these remote spots the finest culture that the west of Europe knew.

To some of these monastic retreats on mountain, bog, or shore came students from nearly the whole Christian world, and so well was the old learning maintained that during several centuries it was said that if in Western Europe any man knew Greek he must be Irish-born or Irish-taught.

In most striking contrast to the stability to which S. Benedict attached so much importance was the undisciplined restlessness of the Irish monks. In the sixth century S. Brandan, a monk of Clonfert, sailed out into the ocean till he came to the fairest country that any man might see, which was a heavenly sight to behold, the trees burdened with ripe fruit, always day and never night, and neither too hot nor too cold.

And in the centuries that followed we find the Irish monks wandering over all lands between Italy, and the Danube,

and Iceland,[2] most diligently preaching the Gospel if there was anyone to convert, and yet appearing even more content to pray and meditate beside the tumbling seas, chanting their psalms to the accompaniment of the screech of sea-gulls and the eternal thud of the waves against the rocks. Many parts of Europe owe the planting or the revivification of their Christianity to the Celtic mystic-monks (p. 178).

Dreamers they may have been and doubtless were, but it is remarkable that the first of them to gain a European reputation was likewise the first to turn the mind of the Christian Church to the serious discussion of one of the greatest questions of the world. The pagans regarded with a half-amused contempt the rather weary controversies concerning the human and divine natures in the Person of Christ that so perplexed and disturbed the mind of the Eastern Church.

It was a Welsh or Irish monk, Pelagius, who broke new ground in denying that everything is preordained, boldly asserting that man may make himself just what he will. His conclusion that we may do without the grace of God—almost, not quite—was dangerous Christian speculation, and it brought upon him the crushing wrath of S. Augustine himself; but at least the Celtic Church had raised a point of very vital interest not to Christians only, but to all mankind.

It was in line with the cheerful, happy, rather care-free type of mind that has ever marked the Celt, and enabled him to bear his own misfortunes and help others to bear theirs with a light-heartedness that all men do not know. Much the same character of good-fellowship and keen humour that marks the Irish race today may be traced in these ancient seers.

The renowned John Scotus Erigena, one of the most

[2] The ninth century Irish chronicler Dicuil in his *De mensura orbis terræ* gives an account of many lands, including Iceland and Egypt.

original thinkers of them all—whatever view be taken of some of his conclusions—was a friend of the Emperor, Charles the Bald. About the year 850, when at his court the monk had rather angered the prince, who bade him say what was the difference between a sot and a Scot: "Only this table," was the reply [3]—a pleasantry in substance repeated many times.

The Irish chronicles, some in Latin but most in Erse, are very detailed and minute, but on the whole, it must be confessed, not very entertainingly written, and they almost entirely lack that human interest which is so delightful a feature of the Icelandic *sagas*. They reveal a terrible amount of lawlessness on the part of the very clergy themselves, and very clearly show the strangely unequal character of ancient Irish civilization, magnificent as to learning and art, but appalling as to public order.

The very mission of S. Columba to Iona is said to have been occasioned by most lawless wars. He had secretly copied a psalter that belonged to an abbot named Finnian, who taking the act as theft claimed that the copy was also his. Columba refused to give it up and appealed to the high king at Tara.

The sovereign decided that as to every cow belongs her calf, so the copy belonged to the owner of the original work. Instead of accepting this verdict, which certainly proceeds upon a rather questionable analogy, Columba raised the North and West against the high king, who was defeated and forced to fly to the earthworks of Tara. But rebuked by a synod, and stung by remorse, the Apostle of Scotland sailed out into the northern seas.

Eventually, out of sight of his beloved Ireland, he founded

[3] The authority for this tale is *De Vita et Præceptis Joannis Scoti Erigenee*, chap. iii. See Migne, *P.L.* 122, col. 17. Scotia was originally the name of Ireland. From her colony of Dalriada, in what is now Argyle, came the kings of Scotland, and the name was gradually transferred about the eleventh century.

a convent on the treeless island of Hi, which as Iona was soon to be known to all the earth. Thence sailing over stormy seas and wandering over heather moors and beside the Highland lochs, he penetrated far into Caledonia and sought to win to Christ heathen souls, as many as had perished in the war.

This is the common story, but it is not mentioned by Bede [4] or Adamnan,[5] the former of whom merely says that he came into Britain after having founded in Ireland a noble monastery called the Field of Oaks; the latter, that "God helping, he drove out from Iona, which now has the the primacy, malignant and innumerable demons." In the library of the (Royal) Irish Academy at Dublin is still preserved the copied psalter which for a thousand years was carried as a standard of battle by the Clan O'Donnell to which Columba belonged.[6]

The MS. annals of MacFirbis record (A.D. 700) that "the clergy of Ireland went to their synods with weapons and fought pitched battles and slew many persons therein."

Mixed indeed it may have been, but the ancient culture of Ireland was one of the most splendid products of any age of the Church. So purely Christian was its character that for centuries the country was very widely known as the Island of the Saints.

It was, perhaps, more than any other civilization, the product of monastic hands. By monks, largely at least, its chronicles were kept. By their hands probably in chief the manuscripts were illuminated and perhaps to some degree the ornaments of the Church were fashioned (p. 236). The famous schools were monastic. Wholly by monks was the great missionary work maintained—Ireland's best gift to mankind.

[4] *H.E.*, bk. III, iv.
[5] *Life of Columba*, bk. I, ch. i.
[6] The story is given at great length by Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, bk. IX, ch. i.

No better monument of the ancient glories of monastic Ireland could possibly be asked than: "the city of Ciaran of Clonmacnoise, a dewy-bright, red-rose town, of its royal seed, of lasting fame, the hosts in the pure-streamed peaceful town." [7] On desolate peat bogs beside the smooth-flowing Shannon stand about a dozen ancient chapels, all ruined except one, in a large churchyard, treeless except for a few old gnarled and almost leafless ashes. Two round towers and many sculptured crosses, the rude architecture of some of the chapels with beautiful carved details in a few of them, and numerous monuments of almost every age, make the place profoundly interesting to all who love the work of other days; and yet the very lonely desolation of the spot perhaps constitutes its greatest charm.[8]

Here was the one convent of Ireland that was common to all the septs, where each clan had a chapel of its own, peculiarly and universally esteemed, its property so vast that half Ireland was said to be within its bounds, and deemed so holy that all interred within its sacred soil were assured of entrance into heaven.

Founded in the early sixth century by Ciaran, it remained the most famous of all Irish monasteries throughout the period of independence; later in the Middle Ages it passed to the Augustinian order (p. 97), yet so great was the respect for the days gone by that instead of building a cloistered abbey in the usual style, the ancient Celtic chapels were zealously preserved. But yet in spite of all, no convent was more often burned by lawless Irish bands.

In most extraordinary contrast with the rudeness of the buildings belonging to these ancient monastic retreats was the beauty and value of the things that they contained.

[7] Quoted from an ancient Irish poem, by Douglas Hyde, *A Literary History of Ireland*, p. 205.

[8] See my article *Irish Cathedral Churches*, in the *Archæological Journal* (*London*), vol. lxxii, No. 288; 2nd ser., vol. xxii, No. 4, pp. 350-352. One of the churches of Clonmacnoise was the cathedral of a diocese.

"The Book of Kells," perhaps the most beautiful illuminated manuscript on earth, drawn and painted by devoted monkish hands about the seventh century, though now the chief treasure of the library of Trinity College, Dublin, was probably kept for the first few centuries of its existence in huts no better than those of the South African Kafirs today. At Clonmacnoise itself in 1129 "the Four Masters" record how, "The altar of the great Church of Cluain-mic-nois was robbed, and jewels were carried off from thence, namely the carracan (model) of Solomon's temple, which had been presented by Maelseachlainn, son of Domhnall; * * * and the three jewels which Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair had presented, *i.e.,* a silver drinking cup of Ua Riada, king of Aradh; a silver chalice with a burnishing of gold upon it, with an engraving by the daughter of Ruaidhri Ua Conchobhair; and the silver cup of Ceallach, successor of Patrick." Incidentally this list is interesting as showing that the ancient Irish works of art were sometimes made by women.

The genesis of each new movement in monasticism was nearly always marked by the coöperation of women, sisters or close associates of the men. In the cases of SS. Pachomius, Basil, Augustine, Benedict, and Francis of Assisi, the houses for monks and nuns were far apart, separated by a river or by miles of countryside.

But Celtic monasticism was not averse to double houses and sometimes a lady ruled the whole foundation as in the case of S. Bridget of Kildare (p. 101), one of Ireland's three great patron saints.[9]

But for their exceedingly limited power of administration, the Irish might have evolved a third type of Christianity as different from that of the Latin Church as it is from the Greek. But this was not to come. Irish govern-

[9] The others being SS. Patrick and Columba. The three are frequently represented together as on the east gable of the cathedral at Downpatrick.

ment, both of Church and State, was largely in chaos when the English conquest in the twelfth century confounded confusion, but did not for a long time, and never completely, succeed in assimilating Irish Christianity to the general orthodoxy of Western Europe.

Vainly in 1220 did an English bishop put out the sacred fire of S. Bridget of Kildare. The Irish got it relighted as soon as they possibly could and preserved something of the strange atmosphere of one of the most unique monasteries of Europe, a community of Christian vestal virgins that had been founded by S. Bridget in the early part of the sixth century.[10]

In the ancient history of the Irish Church we meet with nothing that can be called an order. Each monastery went its own way; each great abbot was practically a law to himself. Such organization as there was, developed along tribal lines. The level of asceticism frequently maintained was exceedingly high. There was all the traditional monastic sympathy with birds and beasts.

In Ireland itself the lovely traditions of the ancient Celtic Church are fragrant to this day, yet despite their splendid missionary work, the early monks had little of their very own to give the world. Workman points out that the system of penitentials is one of the chief survivals from the earliest days.[11]

First in their mission convents, then in their own island, the rather confused traditions of the Celts gave way to the organizing genius of Rome, the customs of Columba and Columbanus yielded to the Benedictine Rule.

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The ancient chronicles of Ireland were digested into a single record in 1632-36 by Franciscan friars; their work is generally

[10] *The Four Masters* gives the date of her death as 525.
[11] *Evolution of the Monastic Ideal*, p. 212 seq.

known from the chief compilers as *The Four Masters,* but it is often cited by the name of Colgan, another Franciscan of Louvain. Some of the works they used, such as the *Annals of Clanmacnoise* have perished, so that *The Four Masters* has some value as an original source. A very convenient edition is that by John O'Donovan, Dublin, 1851. This has parallel columns in Erse and English. Another compilation of the old Chronicles is the *History of Ireland* by Geoffrey Keating, tr. by J. O'Mahony, New York, 1866. Adamnan's *Life of Columba* is conveniently accessible in Huyshe's English edition.

Douglas Hyde's *Literary History of Ireland* is a monument of patient research.

For details of the different Irish monasteries, Archdall's *Monasticon Hibernicum,* 1786, is invaluable.

Among other secondary authorities are Montalembert's *Monks of the West;* Prof. George T. Stokes, *Ireland and the Celtic Church;* Prof. Bury's *Life of St. Patrick,* and a particularly good chapter (iv) in Workman's *Evolution of the Monastic Ideal.*

CHAPTER VII

NUNS, HERMITS, AND PILGRIMS

Nuns: It may surely be claimed for monasticism that it has done something for the position of women. If indeed it be true that they have not played a part in asceticism at all comparable to that of men, at least women have been as prominent in the cloister as their sisters ever were in the world. Along some lines, indeed, far more.

One of the most remarkable women of all time was undoubtedly S. Hilda, the renowned Abbess of Streanshalch, which the Danes called Whitby, whose double monastery for men and women preserved a very ancient tradition of the Celtic Church. By the Irish missionaries it was introduced into Saxondom, and there it took deep root.

It was during her time in this abbey that there was held (in 664) the most momentous council that ever came together on English soil. The convention was purely monastic; it gathered in an abbey, or perhaps beside it on the grassy slopes that stand high above the North Sea. Monks were the chief debaters: S. Wilfrid, who pointed out the absurdity of a little community on a fringe of the earth defying the customs of the universal world; and S. Colman, who spoke with pardonable enthusiasm of the great tradition of Columba, and the still greater one of the Apostle, S. John, whose Easter he claimed to keep.

Two civilizations stood opposed, the Latin South and the Celtic North. Intruding Saxondom was asked to make its choice. Should it share with Europe the greatest metropolis of the earth, now in the realm of religion regaining what it

had once held and lost in the realm of politics; or should it honour as the centre of its faith a remote rock island with neither wealth, population, nor power? The nominal question concerned the proper date for Easter, but eventually a decision was reached on rather strangely material grounds. To S. Peter, all admitted, Christ had delivered the keys of the portals of heaven. Could he reasonably be expected to open to any that minimized the authority of his own Church? To Columba no one could claim that Christ had given any such powers. So the king, Oswy, decided in favour of Wilfrid and of Rome.[1]

The importance of this decision could not easily be exaggerated. Had it been in favour of Iona instead of Rome a union of Celtic and Saxon Christianity might have had time to consolidate in the British Isles a culture so different from that of the Continent that the whole story of England had been changed.

In a monastery whose Superior was a woman as famous as any of her contemporaries, the fate of Britain was decided for centuries to come. And yet it is possible enough that a decision in favour of so ill-administered a Church as that of the Celts would have had to be revised. Wilfrid is in many ways a far less lovable character than his rivals, several of them saints, but he represented a broader view.

The names of women are very prominent in the annals of Celtic and Saxon monasticism. All admired maidens who set their virginity above everything else. Besides SS. Bridget and Hilda, S. Ebba of Coldingham[2] and S. Etheldreda of Ely were as well known as any in the ascetic story of their day. Eventually the feudalization of monasticism inevitably tended to reduce the prestige of women rulers, who become

[1] The council is described by Bede, *H.E.*, bk. III, ch. 25; and Eddius, *Life of Wilfrid*. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, An. 664, merely says that Colman with his companions went to his own country. Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, bk. XII, ch. i, gives a detailed account.

[2] For both see Bede, *H.E.*, bk. IV, ch. xix.

far less prominent after the tenth century. During the later Middle Ages no one of the first religious houses of Europe was a nunnery. The great Benedictine abbey of Whitby rose on the site of S. Hilda's convent, but it still bore her name; today the majestic ruins of its thirteenth century church stand high above the cliffs of jade, seen far over the North Sea. At Ely and Coldingham as well monks kept the Benedictine Rule where nuns had lived before.

Still some great houses of women survived, notably in the West country, Romsey and Shaftesbury, both with royal associations. The latter was so rich that it was popularly said in the Middle Ages that if the Abbot of Glastonbury could marry the Abbess of Shaftesbury their son would be richer than the king.[3]

It is perhaps in the realm of literature that cloistered women have contributed most to the world. There is not a great deal to record of the writings of lay women between Sappho and Madame de Staël, or at least Madame de Sévigné. But during the Middle Ages there lived in different cloisters of Northern Europe a succession of mystics who do something to fill the gap.

In the tenth century, Hrotsvith was writing her well-formed metrical legends, her vigorous religious plays, and rhyming chronicles, based largely on the Latin authors whose works were in the library of her Saxon convent at Gandersheim.

In the twelfth century the more famous Hildegard,[4] of Bingen on the Rhine, a double monastery for monks and nuns, was writing her visions and prophecies, some of which the great S. Bernard (p. 141) declared to be divinely inspired, while Pope Eugenius III wrote to express his wonder

[3] Dugdale, *Monasticon*, vol. i, p. 472. The remark is still very common in both towns, but probably the tradition has not been continuous. Dugdale very possibly preserved it. See also Fuller, *Church History of Britain*, III, p. 332.

[4] She died 1178; for her writings see Migne, *P.L.* 197.

and delight; and the Emperor Barbarossa once asked her advice. Her contemporary, S. Elizabeth of Schönau, had revelations about the famous virgins of Köln and S. Ursula. It is remarkable that her passion for celibacy made her feel doubts as to the complete depravity of heretics who were supposed to be opposed to marriage, the Cathari.

In the thirteenth century the literary nuns of Helfta in Saxony were giving their house wide fame for its Christian mysticism. The well-known revelations of Sister Gertrude (d. 1311) have a clear, sweet note of true monastic devotion and deep love of Our Lord, but before the time of S. Thomas à Kempis (p. 213) no other writer, monk or nun, seems to have come quite to the level of real inspiration that characterizes the Lady Julian of Norwich.

The revelations of this fourteenth-century mystic make a real appeal. They stand out distinct and clear. They leave a strong impression which many of such writings do not. As she describes the heaven that she saw from her lonely cell, she gives us a real picture that all would like to remember in death: "And in this Shewing mine understanding was lifted up into heaven where I saw our Lord as a lord in His own house, which hath called all His dearworthy servants and friends to a stately feast. Then I saw the Lord take no place in His own house, but I saw Him royally reign in His house, fulfilling it with joy and mirth, Himself endlessly to gladden and to solace His dearworthy friends, full homely and full courteously, with marvellous melody of endless love, in His own fair blessed Countenance." [5]

And there is something extraordinarily beautiful in her description of the blessed Virgin: "I saw her ghostly, in bodily likeness: a simple maid and a meek, young of age and little waxen above a child, in the stature that she was when she conceived. Also God showed in part the wisdom and the truth of her soul: wherein I understood the reverent

[5] *Revelation*, vi.

beholding in which she beheld her God and Maker, marvelling with great reverence that He would be born of her that was a simple creature of His making."

But while the mystic writings of mediæval nuns are apt to compare quite favourably with such rather ordinary revelations as those, for example, of the Monk of Evesham (really Eynsham), it is evident that they were rather inclined to prefer to receive their rules from men. The Cistercian chronicler, Ailred of Rievaulx (the biographer of King David I of Scotland) in the twelfth century wrote a rule which advises nuns to live by the work of their hands, not to own flocks, nor to engage in secular business, nor to turn their cells into schools.

The better known "ancren riwle" of the following century distinguishes between professed nuns and ladies who merely lived together without taking any vows. "The true recluses," it says, "are indeed birds of heaven, that fly aloft and sit on the green boughs singing merrily; that is, they meditate, enraptured, upon the blessedness of heaven that never fadeth but is ever green, singing right merrily."

Keeping school is fraught with danger from the personal affection it is apt to bring. So it will be better to let servants do any teaching that must be done. No other animal than a cat should be kept, unless the community has need of a cow. Apparently dogs were deemed unsuitable to religious as entailing a good deal of attention, which seems indeed to have been the case with the one owned by Chaucer's nun. At Carrow Priory, Norwich, the monastery cat once contrived to make considerable trouble by killing a pet sparrow belonging to a nun, an incident immortalized by one of Skelton's best-known poems,[6] which to a slight extent helps us to picture the atmosphere of a sisterhood at the end of the Middle Ages. The evil custom of using convents for the

[6] *Boke of Phyllyp Sparowe slain by Gib, our cat savage, among the Nones Blake*, by John Skelton (d. 1529). Ed. A. Dyce.

support of girls belonging to leading families for whom no husbands could be found had long tended to multiply the number of nuns with no real vocation to religion.

That the old double monastery rather appealed to the British mind seems to be indicated by the way it reappears in the only distinctively English order of the Middle Ages. S. Gilbert of Sempringham in Lincolnshire (c. 1083-1189), after studying all monastic rules with the object of taking its best features from each, decided in favour of houses for both nuns and monks. The head of the whole establishment was a prior with direct charge of the canons, and the women were under the control of three colleague prioresses, who took it in turn to preside in chapter.

The nuns did the cooking and sewing, besides being in charge of the library, but hatches were arranged so that men and women should see as little as possible of each other. Excavations at Watton Abbey [7] have shown that a wall divided the church so that both nuns and canons when in choir could see the altar and take part in the same singing but could not see each other.

The Premonstratensian order (p. 97) was originally double, but this was abolished as early as 1137, though some few nunneries remained.[8] Another double order was that of Fontevraud,[9] which had a house at Amesbury in England.

There were very obvious dangers in these houses and the system never spread very far. As early as 1200, we find Abbot Hugh of Cluny (p. 123) issuing an order that no woman might be received into any monastery of the order except *ad succurrendum;* that is, when there is immediate danger of death.[10]

[7] In Yorkshire, founded about 1150 by Eustace Fitz John on an old nunnery site.

[8] See Helyot, *Histoire des ordres monastiques*, 1714, ii, p. 175.

[9] This abbey was founded by Robert of Arbrissel (d. 1117), who made a lady, Husende of Champagne, its Superior.

[10] D. Royce, *Landbok of Winchcombe*, I, 210. Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, I, 480.

It is remarkable, however, that as late as the fourteenth century a woman felt that the cause of religion could best be served by the foundation of a new order and by a revival of double monasteries. One of the most interesting monuments in the cathedral at Upsala, Sweden, commemorates a man known to his own generation as the president of a commission that codified the laws of Upland in 1296, but to us as the father of S. Brigitta, or Briget (1304-73). Though she had been married and was the mother of seven children, she developed in later life a great admiration for monasticism.

She received a number of revelations which are not very interesting in themselves,[11] but they were so pointed in their allusions that she had to travel abroad. She made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and spent some time in Italy, attempting to get the Popes back from Avignon to Rome, in which latter city she died.

Her order centred at Wadstena, in her native land. At a time when monastic culture was beginning to decay (p. 241) it tried to collect books and to promote education and in fact is chiefly remarkable as the last great effort that was made in the Middle Ages—and it was after the rise of the friars—to revive without any serious modification the older monastic ideals.

The only house of the Brigittine order in England was Zion on the Thames, and it came into being through the marriage of a daughter of Henry IV to Eric XIII of Sweden (1406). The chapel had a double choir, separated only by an iron screen, so that the monks and nuns could see each other as they chanted their offices.

At the dissolution some of them retired to the Continent and have continued their corporate existence—the only English convent that escaped complete dissolution.

Hermits: Despite the decision of S. Benedict of Aniane

[11] There are copious extracts in Bp. Wordsworth's *Hale Lectures*, 1910, *The National Church of Sweden*, pp. 129-132.

to seek a revival of the Rule of S. Benedict the Great (p. 93), there were important mediæval developments in the direction of a completer return to the genesis of monasticism as practised by the solitaries of the desert. Purely from the point of view of the story of asceticism these are possibly of even more significance than the rise of the orders of Cluny and Citeaux, but as we are principally concerned with the place of monasticism in the history of the world their importance is very much less.

In the eleventh century the Camaldulensian order was founded (c. 1020), by Romuald of Ravenna who, after sowing his wild oats, became exceedingly austere and helped to bring about in Italy a remarkable monastic revival which sought to restore much of the manner of life of the Egyptian monks.

General religious life was at a low ebb; the great Emperor, Otto III, the last who ever reigned at Rome, was trying to reform the Papacy by the inauguration of a German, Bruno (Gregory V) and he greatly welcomed Romuald's reform, reverently kissing his cowl. Though an eremitical or hermit order, the Camaldulensians followed the Benedictines in their splendid missionary work. Vallombrosa, among the Apennines, founded in 1038 by Gualbert, became the centre of another such order.

That of Grandmont (1073) was almost purely French and that its *bons hommes* might be free for their contemplation, all business affairs were entrusted to lay brothers. Its Rule, based on the Camaldulensian, was committed to writing in 1124 after the death of its founder, Stephen, a nobleman of Auvergne.

A German, Bruno of Köln, was the founder of the best known of the eremitical orders. It dates from about 1086 and takes its name from the mother house in the deserts of Chartreuse, near Grenoble, in what was Burgundy of old. Alone of all great orders, though it never was very large, the

Carthusians boast that they have never needed to be reformed, for through all the centuries till today they have kept something like the austerity with which they began.

Their severe asceticism made a profound impression on the Benedictines of that day. Guibert, Abbot of Nogent, wrote of them: "They hardly ever speak, and if they want anything they make signs. If they drink wine it is watered so as to be scarcely stronger than water. They wear a hair shirt next the skin, while their other garments are scanty and thin." [12] Peter the Venerable (p. 134) says of them: "To mortify the flesh they wear hair shirts; their fasting is almost continuous; * * * they never eat meat; cheese and eggs only Sundays and Thursdays. * * * They live in separate little houses like the monks of Egypt and occupy their time in silence in reading, prayer, and working with their hands, particularly writing books. They say most of the offices in their cells, but come together in their church for vespers and matins." [13]

Just under the Hambleton Hills of Yorkshire still stand the singularly complete ruins of a house of this order, which was built in the fifteenth century; Mount Grace is absolutely destitute of that monastic magnificence so characteristic of Cistercian abbeys not far off. The severely simple cells surround two large courts, each with a hatch through the wall by which food could be passed to its occupant.

Between the courts is a church, small and extremely plain (p. 235); but that in one respect at least there was an improvement on the habits of the Egyptian monks is proved by the presence of the usual monastic lavatory at the entrance to the refectory, a building not very frequently used, for only on particular festivals were there any common meals.

Directly, perhaps, this order has played but little part in the story of the world, but it was a work by a Carthusian

[12] Migne, *P.L.*, 161, col. 853.
[13] *Ib.*, 189, col. 943-5. *De miraculis*, II, 28.

monk which at a very critical time turned the thoughts of Ignatius Loyola to religion and changed the whole current of his life.

Pilgrims: Visiting places consecrated by the faith was a very common occupation of our mediæval fathers. Not again till the building of railroads did men tour Europe so much. Not infrequently there was exactly that mingling of religion and pleasure, of pilgrimage and picnic, that may yet be seen in the ancient shrines of Japan. Despite the utmost difference of every detail, much of the atmosphere of Chaucer's pilgrimage to Canterbury may be felt in Nikko or Kyoto today.

Veneration for the last resting-places of saints and pilgrimage to their tombs seems to be nearly as old as Christianity. It was probably the origin of the dedication of churches to saints. Reginald Pecock thus defends the practice: "And ferther, sithen it is not resonable and conuenient that such bodies or bonis or relikis be left withoute in the baar feeld (and that bothe for it were azens the eese of the peple which schulde come therto in reyny and wyndi wedris, and for that thei myzten thanne be take awey be wickid men not dredind God) therfore it is ful resonable and worthi for to bilde ouer tho bodies and bonis and other relikis chapellis or chirchis." [14]

The custom of pilgrimage antedates the rise of monasticism, but both in East and West most chief shrines came into the possession of monks. In Britain those of S. Patrick at Down, S. Columba at Iona, S. Thomas at Canterbury, S. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, enshrined at Durham, Our Lady of Walsingham, S. Edmund, S. Alban, S. Swithun at Winchester, the Confessor at Westminster, and Edward II at Gloucester, with many more, were all in the churches of

[14] *Repressor of overmuch blaming of the clergy*, II, 8. The work did much to get the writer into trouble; it is strongly anti-Lollard and yet not according to the orthodox standards of the day. The work belongs to the middle of the fifteenth century and is printed in the *Rolls Series*.

monks, but others of importance such as S. David and S. Richard of Chichester were in the churches of secular canons.

Monks guard most of the holy places of the East, but in Western Europe on the mainland many great shrines have always been in secular hands, such as the Three Kings, at Milan, carried off by Barbarossa to Köln, S. Olaf, at Trondhjem, Charles the Great, at Aachen.

In the treasury of the cathedral at Sens is a most interesting collection of thirteenth-century documents relating to the miracles and canonization of S. Edmund Rich, Confessor, and Archbishop of Canterbury, 1234-40. He died at Soisy and was buried in the abbey at Pontigny, canonized 1248.

In 1240, Guy de Villenauxe, Abbot, notifies the faithful at Canterbury that miracles are being wrought at the tomb. In 1244, after communications from the university of Oxford, the convent of Merton, and Robert, Bishop of Salisbury, an inquiry was held at Pontigny by Albert, Archbishop of Armagh, and Lucas, Dean of Paris. Next year the former issued an indulgence to all visitors to the tomb. In 1245, (S.) Richard, Bishop of Chichester, the Prior of Esseby, and Robert Bacon, a Dominican friar, report on the miracles and next year the Bishops of Lincoln and London publish another report favourable to the miracles.

We then get indulgences or other endorsements of the miracles from the Archbishop of Canterbury and several other English prelates, from Scottish, German, and French bishops, besides those of Lacedemonia, Antarade, and of Sora, while Henry III of England in 1251 presented four candles. Finally on April 20, 1255, Pope Alexander IV issues an indulgence of seven years for all who visit the shrine and offer alms.

Probably the documents that survive are only part of the original collection. The whole suggests that the monastic or other guardians of the tomb of a saint, or other prominent

Christian, sometimes sent travellers to interview bishops and others whose endorsement was expected to carry weight in every part of Christendom to get indulgences for their pilgrims. These might be expected to enhance the popularity of the new shrine by demonstrating to patrons from every land that the place was accepted as worthy of veneration by the bishops of their own home towns.

That sometimes a business element entered into such matters is evident from the fact that when the rather worthless king of England, Edward II, was put to death in Berkeley castle, one church after another refused sepulture. Thokey, Abbot of Gloucester, however, realizing that a reaction would inevitably come and that the stock of the murdered sovereign was sure to rise as time softened existing animosities, gave a tomb in the choir of his church.

His prescience was abundantly justified. After a few years the tomb became a shrine, and from the offerings of the pilgrims most of the church was splendidly transformed as we see it today in all the magnificence of the twilight of the Gothic style.

The pilgrimage to Canterbury inspired in Chaucer one of the finest of all English poems. It is remarkable that in later days its lingering memories suggested the "Pilgrim's Progress." Staying in the neighbourhood of Guildford beside the North Downs, on the road from the west country to Canterbury, when the memories of old days were still fresh, Bunyan must have spoken to men whose grandfathers had made the pilgrimage. And as he wandered over the grass-grown way and explored the downs and the swamps, the rivers and the fields, as he visited Shelford Fair and looked up to the Surrey Hills, the idea of his great masterpiece must gradually have taken shape in his mind.

It was mediævalism that inspired the noblest of all the writings of early Puritanism, which in its general atmosphere still preserves much of the old monastic point of view.

It is the spirit of the Middle Ages that pervades the work, but in its pure simple language and its tremendous sincerity, in the marvellous and unstudied success of its allegory, it can rank with the very finest outpourings of the soul of Christianity in any age.

By the other great Puritan writer of that same period, the middle of the seventeenth century, was described the charm and beauty of monastic life in poetry that has certainly been excelled by no one. The whole spirit of the mediæval mystic in his cloister lives again, as for many of us nowhere else, in Milton's "Il Penseroso."

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CHAPTER VIII

THE GREAT HOUSE OF CLUNY

Of all the great abbeys of mediæval days, there was none quite so powerful as that of Cluny, which became eventually the mother house of an order that counted several hundred priories stretching from Palestine to Scotland, all under the immediate control of the Abbot of Cluny himself. He enjoyed a preëminence overshadowed only by that of the Pope. Within his own domain, he coined money and exercised almost regal power.

The house was founded by William, Duke of Aquitaine, and the original charter, dated September 11, 910, is exceedingly interesting as illustrating the general point of view of the pious founders of mediæval times; in its main provisions it is exactly like a thousand more.

"To all right thinkers it is clear that the providence of God has so provided for certain rich men that, by means of their transitory possessions, if they use them well, they may be able to merit everlasting rewards. As to which thing, indeed, the divine word, showing it to be possible and altogether advising it, says: 'The riches of a man are the redemption of his soul,' [1] I, William, count and duke by the grace of God, diligently pondering this, and desiring to provide for my own safety while I am still able, have considered it advisable—nay, most necessary—that from the temporal goods which have been conferred upon me I should give some little portion for the gain of my soul.

[1] *Proverbs*, xiii, 8.

"I do this, indeed, in order that I who have thus increased in wealth may not, perchance, at the last be accused of having spent all in caring for my body, but rather may rejoice, when fate at last shall snatch all things away, in having reserved something for myself. * * * I hand over from my own rule to the holy apostles, Peter namely and Paul, the possessions over which I hold sway, the town of Cluny namely, with the demesne manor and the church in honour of St. Mary the mother of God and of St. Peter the prince of the apostles, together with all the things pertaining to it, the vills, indeed, the chapels, the serfs of both sexes, the vines, the fields, the meadows, the woods, the waters and their outlets, the mills, the incomes and revenues, what is cultivated and what is not, all in their entirety. * * *

"I adjure you, oh holy apostles and glorious princes of the world, Peter and Paul, and thee, oh supreme pontiff of the apostolic see, that, through the canonical and apostolic authority which ye have received from God, ye do remove from participation in the holy church and in eternal life, the robbers and invaders and alienators of these possessions, which I do give to you with joyful heart and ready will."

The Rule of S. Benedict is prescribed and the charter contemplates nothing like the foundation of a new order. The Duke asked advice from his friend Berno, of whose well-ordered little monastery at Baume he had heard excellent things. To the ducal horror the Abbot declared that the only really suitable site for the new house was his favourite hunting place at Cluny and further, perhaps not entirely without a grim sense of humour, he selected the dog-kennel as occupying the exact spot where the church should rise. The Duke was shocked, as any good sportsman might be. He protested, but it was quite in vain.

Bidden to reflect what reward God would give him for dogs and what for monks, he let Berno have his own way, and where the hunting dogs had bayed there rose the great church

that in size [2] and magnificence surpassed all other buildings of mediæval date.

The abbey was endowed with wide local autonomy and freed from secular control by any earthly power. The charter provides that no count nor other worldly ruler, no bishop, nor even the Pope may invade its property. Thus from the first, Cluny was the seat of a prince abbot, who was rapidly to take his place among the highest prelates of Christendom.

It is remarkable that there was no intrinsic reason why Cluny should soar to so high an eminence; no great saint was there enshrined, it represented no important city or state, its founder was a feudal prince not more illustrious than many of his fellows.

But the abbey may be said from the very first to have stood preëminently for a monastic imperialism that was presently to influence the whole Church. It sought to reincarnate the Roman spirit of discipline and that on the vastest scale. S. Benedict in his Rule had taken the Roman conception of the *patria potestas;* the abbot was the father in a monastic family, who claimed no high position in the Church, and in the State still less.

Cluny rapidly evolved an abbot who stood in the place of a sovereign and exercised imperial sway over every house of the vast organization. The mediæval orders, and Cluny in particular, might have tended to decentralize the Church by giving to monastic Christianity other capitals than Rome, but any such tendency was completely neutralized by the closest union of the ascetic forces with the Papacy.

In authority the Abbot of Cluny was second but to the

[2] Prof. Edward Prior points out (*History of Gothic Art in England,* p. 34) that no less than four English churches were larger than the original church at Cluny,—London, Winchester, S. Edmundsbury, and S. Albans—all but the first monastic. But the addition of the huge narthex at Cluny, finished in 1220, made the Burgundian church larger than any of its English rivals.

sovereign Pontiff, the only other ecclesiastic (except perhaps the grand masters of the military orders [chap. xv]) whose authority was Europe-wide; more powerful than any metropolitan, yet in orders merely a priest. The heads of all the daughter priories met together in the General Chapter, but this was purely advisory and all real authority in the immense organization belonged to the Abbot of Cluny, who thus towered over all other figures in the monastic world almost as did the Pope in the universal Church. Far too much depended on his own personality for permanently effective rule.

Berno died before any great building progress was made. The real moulder of the destinies of Cluny was Odo, the second abbot. His life was written by an enthusiastic disciple, another monk named John.[3] Odo had a very peculiar veneration for S. Martin (p. 57) to whom his father had dedicated him when a child.

He was horrified, however, by the monks of Tours who were so entirely oblivious of the traditions of their great Father that they would not even wear monastic garb; they went about in flowing robes of many colours and wore shoes that shone like glass.[4] Evidently the ravages of the Northmen and the general confusion they brought about were ruining monastic life.

Eventually at Baume he had found congenial cloister life and because of his learning he was appointed schoolmaster. When nearly fifty years of age he became the Abbot of Cluny and energetically entered upon the task of building the structures that were needed. Funds were lacking, the plans were on a vast scale, many difficulties were encountered, but S. Martin, who was always very highly honoured at Cluny, gave miraculous help.

[3] *Vita Odonis a Joanne*, Migne, *P. L.* 133.

[4] *Vita*, III, 1. It is remarkable that monastic excess in dress in the Middle Ages frequently took the form of very splendid shoes.

In 927, Odo obtained a royal charter from Rudolf of Burgundy, king of the Franks, confirming the privileges granted by the founder, particularly its freedom from royal authority and the right of the abbot to coin money.

The good name of the house and his own prestige were greatly enhanced by the much needed and successful reform which he carried out at Fleury, an ancient abbey whose reputation stood very high from its enshrining the bones of S. Benedict and his sister, Scholastica. These had been piously stolen from Monte Cassino in the sixth century by the second abbot of Fleury, aided first by a miraculous light which guided his agent to the shrine, and then by a mist which concealed him from pursuing soldiers. [5]

This good work was only the beginning of the splendid part that Odo took in the monastic reform which in the early tenth century was preparing the way for that brilliant revival of civilization which so marked the eleventh, a development often attributed (and perhaps with some measure of truth) to the general relief that the year 1000 had safely passed without bringing the much dreaded end of the world.

Tirelessly, both in Italy and Gaul, Odo travelled about reviving monastic life, which had suffered sorely in the barbarian invasions. Among other houses, Monte Cassino itself, which was in a pitiable condition, felt his fostering care. He appointed his disciple Baldwin its abbot.

Combining great powers of organization with a deep humility and real delight in helping those he met, sometimes in the most menial way, fired by an apostolic fervour and animated by the truest piety, Odo was one of the best products of monasticism in a dark and dreary age.

While he was crossing the Cottian Alps his party fell in with a poor old man staggering under the weight of a sack

[5] The success of the theft is admitted by the Cassinese monk, Paul Warnefrid, who wrote a *History of the Lombards* about 775. See Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, I, p. 237, seq.

of garlic, onions, and bread, which were so evil-smelling that John himself got away as far as he possibly could. But for miles and miles over the steepest portions of the alpine road, while the old man rode upon the Abbot's horse, the repellent load was carried by one of the chief leaders of the Europe of that day. When John at length came up, Odo, still bearing the load, rebuked him for objecting to the odour of what the poor man had to eat and told him it was time to chant some psalms.[6]

John tells the story against himself. It is so typical of Odo's whole character that it is not at all difficult to account for the extraordinary popularity that he and other monks were everywhere winning for themselves. Of all the rulers that Europe ever knew, none so deserved the people's love as the best and most devoted of the monks.

Odo may possibly have originated the common proverb: "Beauty is only skin-deep," which occurs in a very characteristic passage where the vileness of the body is pointed out in language that recalls Buddhism.[7] He was stricken by mortal sickness while in Rome, but by the special favour of S. Martin his strength was temporarily restored and he died at Tours amid the much loved associations of childhood (942 A.D.)

Thus very early in its career the Abbey of Cluny showed that imperial spirit of solicitude for monastic revival and organization that marked the course of its history. Conveniently remote from serious royal interference, yet close to a chief highway from the north of Europe to Rome, it had many advantages of site and the growth of its power was rapid.

The story of each newly rising order is monotonously the same. The early members displayed a saintly humility that

[6] *Vita, a Joanne monacho*, II, 6. Migne, *P.L.* 133 col. 64.
[7] *S. Odonis Collationum Libri Tres*, II, ix. Migne, *P.L.* vol. 133, col. 556.

recalls much that is best in the traditions of the Egyptian monks; their successors developed a pomp and magnificence that is more reminiscent of Louis XIV, or Napoleon. Yet no princely abbot at the very worst was such a pest to mankind as the war-lords that Europe breeds.

The fourth Abbot of Cluny was Maiolus, a man of noble birth, the trusted and intimate friend of Otto the Great, and, despite his high birth, such an enthusiast for monastic reform that he apparently refused the Papacy itself. He was animated by the same high spirituality as Odo, dividing all spare time between silent prayer and reading, moderate in all things, and so devoted to charity that on one occasion he improved upon the record of S. Martin himself by giving his whole cloak to a beggar.[8]

Among other convents of ancient date that in the true spirit of Cluny he did something to reform were Lerins itself (p. 69) and S. Bénigne at Dijon. (The rebuilt church of the latter became the cathedral after the old one had been destroyed in the French Revolution.) Captured in the defiles of the Alps by marauding Saracens, Maiolus is said to have converted several of the Moslems, but Cluny was temporarily impoverished in order to ransom its Abbot.

Odilo, the fifth Abbot, who also came of the Burgundian nobility, displayed the imperial spirit of Cluny by rebuilding the cloister[9] and other portions in so splendid a style that he used to boast that like Cæsar Augustus he had found his seat of wood but would leave it of marble. It was apparently his work that distressed the mind of S. Bernard (p. 231) as being so inappropriate for monks.

All the time the authority of the Abbot was being extended, partly by the foundation of new Cluniac houses and partly by the voluntary submission to the central abbey of

[8] *Vita Sancti Maioli, auctore Syro monacho*, II, 18, Migne, *P.L.* 137, col. 763.

[9] Of the cloister there are few remains, but some capitals in the surviving portions of the church answer to S. Bernard's description.

older priories. Odilo was intimate with sovereigns, for Cluny was ever an aristocratic house. Even with emperors, he associated on something like equal terms. After the coronation of Henry II, the Pope (Benedict VIII) presented publicly to the holy Roman Emperor a golden apple surmounted by a cross. Gratefully accepting the gift, the sovereign at once passed it on to the Abbot of Cluny, declaring, "It is more fitting that this should belong to those who tread the pomps of the world underfoot and follow the cross of the Saviour." [10]

Thus Cluny secured emphatic imperial recognition of a very special place indeed. To its Abbot in preference to any one of the princely archbishops of the Rhineland was handed the choicest symbolic gift that the Pope could present to the Emperor himself. In his favour a German sovereign preferred a Frenchman or at least a Burgundian to any of the great Teutonic ecclesiastics.

The impression that the rising magnificence of Cluny was making upon unsympathetic outsiders is interestingly set forth in the rather laboured lampoon written by Adalbero, the Bishop of Laon (p. 193). A monk of the old school was sent by him to visit Cluny. He returned in an impossibly short time, incredibly transformed.

No longer clothed in monastic garb, but with high pointed toes to his shoes and spurs that pricked the ground, he leapt off his foaming steed and called for wife and children. The Bishop he addressed with clenched fist and stretched-out arm without an atom of respect. "I am a soldier now," he said, "and if a monk, a monk with a difference. Indeed I am no longer a monk, but fight at the command of a king, my master Odilo." [11]

This is hardly the judgement of Odilo that posterity will

[10] L. M. Smith, *Cluny*, p. 151. She quotes *Rod. Glab*, I, 5.
[11] *Adalberonis Carmen* (*ad Rotbertum regem Francorum*), lines 80-115; Migne, *P.L.* 141, col. 771, seq.

endorse. He was extremely interested in the effort to end, or at least moderate, the pest of war that marked the beginning of the eleventh century, and he is credited with having by divine inspiration instituted the *treuga Dei,* or peace of God by which all private war was barred from Saturday night till Monday morning.[12]

At least he sought with all his power to deal with what for fifteen hundred years has been Europe's greatest curse.[13] If he had not all the success that might have been hoped, at least our own generation cannot throw many stones.

There was always apt to be difficulty in adjusting the relation of monasticism with the official Church. Basil, in the East had sought to overcome it by a not very happy expedient of amalgamation (p. 47). The early Benedictines had fully accepted the decision of the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) by which all monasteries were to be subject to the diocesan bishops.

Cluny had been expressly exempted from episcopal control, but as (except in Celtic monasteries) it was extremely rare—if indeed it was ever the case unless in exceptional conditions—that any member of a monastic chapter should be in episcopal orders, it was not possible to dispense with outside authority for functions that an ordinary priest could not perform. As by this time it was the custom that most, at any rate, of the monks should be in holy orders (p. 95), the question was of frequent occurrence. The second prelate of Western Christendom was, in the service of the sanctuary, inferior to the bishop of the meanest see.

At the council of Ansa in 1025, Gauzlin, the Bishop of Mâcon, lodged a complaint that, in contempt of his diocesan

[12] Pertz, *Scriptores,* VIII, 403. Hugo Flaviniac, quoted Smith's *Cluny,* p. 182.

[13] Odilo is also credited with the institution of the feast of All Souls (Nov. 2d) on the day following All Hallows. To pray for all Christian souls was preëminently the duty of the monk.

authority, Abbot Odilo had called in another bishop to ordain certain monks.[14] The intruding prelate complained of was Burchard, the Archbishop of Vienne. Odilo naturally pleaded the charters that exempted his abbey from all diocesan authority. To this it was objected that no power in the Church could override the decrees of an œcumenical council and the canons of Chalcedon were precise. An appeal was made to the Pope, who vigorously took up the abbey's cause and the Bishop of Mâcon had completely to withdraw his claims.

It would, of course, have been just the same had he occupied one of the greatest sees of Christendom, but Cluny undoubtedly found it easier to maintain its autonomy because of the relative insignificance of the diocese in which it was situated. The small porch and octagonal towers of the Cathedral of S. Vincent, which are all that the fury of the revolutionists spared, remind one that Mâcon was one of the lesser dioceses of Christendom; the cathedral itself was hardly too large to have formed a Lady Chapel to the huge abbey church at Cluny.

The Popes were drawn by unescapable circumstances into the position of taking the part of the regular clergy against the diocesan bishops. Monasteries were definitely cosmopolitan and as a rule knew no distinction of country or of race. The secular clergy usually had more local associations and as nations began slowly to emerge, as feudalism decayed and the imperial theory grew dim, they were inevitably caught up in the movement.

The mediæval system had no room for a national Church, if for no other reason than that it knew no such thing as a nation, but at different times such forces as Anglicanism and Gallicanism could not be entirely ignored.

That Hildebrand was a monk of Cluny can now no longer be asserted. Indeed doubts have been expressed as to whether

[14] Mansi, *Concilia*, XIX, p. 423.

he was a monk at all.[15] The point is not of great importance; he was undoubtedly inspired by the same great ideals as were the Cluniacs when he determined rigorously to enforce ancient canons on all the clergy, and so to build up a great theocracy by separating the clergy from all worldly interests and giving them no other serious concern than the maintenance of that great organization that has made the Latin Church by far the most impressive religious fabric that the world has ever seen.

During the latter part of the eleventh century the good order of Cluny made so favourable an impression on William de Warenne and his wife Gundrada, (?) daughter of William the Conqueror, that he founded in his own town of Lewes a splendid priory of the same order, thus giving the Cluniacs one of the first of their thirty-five English houses. Doubtless the monks knew how worthily to entertain the great ones of the earth. Possibly the earl was not very critical of monastic magnificence.

In the second charter to Lewes (1087) the founder recites how he and Gundrada, being prevented from passing on to Rome because Pope and Emperor were at war, "turned to the monastery of Cluny, a great and holy abbey in honour of

[15] The only contemporary authority for saying that Hildebrand was a Cluniac is Bonizo of Sutri *Liber ad amicum* (P. Jaffe, *Bibliotheca rerum Germanicarum*, II, 630) and this is worthless. *The Catholic Encyclopædia*, Art. *Gregory VII*, says that Hildebrand was professed in Rome; Workman, *Evolution of the Monastic Ideal*, p. 229, says that he was not a monk; but neither gives any reference. In any case, as Provisor he reformed the convent of S. Paul without the Walls, at Rome, and was entirely in sympathy with monastic ideals.

The chief early Western canons concerning clerical marriage were: *Rome*, in 386 A.D. A layman who has married a widow may not be received among the clergy; Hefele, *Hist. of Councils*, II, p. 387. *.Rome*, in 402 A.D. Bishops, priests and deacons must remain unmarried; Hefele, II, p. 429. *Hippo*, in 398 A.D. Bishops and other clergy must not make their children independent till their morals are well established. *Orange*, in 441 A.D. Married men may not be ordained deacon unless they have made vows of chastity; Hefele, III, p. 163. *Second Synod of Arles*, in 443 or 452 A.D. A married man may not be ordained priest unless he consents to divorce; Hefele, III, p. 168.

S. Peter; * * * and because we found the sanctity, the religion and the charity of that place so great, and we were received with such honour by the good Prior and all the holy convent into their society and fraternity, we began to have a love and devotion towards that order and to that house above all others which we had seen"; and they had visited many monasteries both in Burgundy and France.

The Stewart family, later to ascend the Scottish throne, founded in the twelfth century a Cluniac priory in Paisley. This house, in 1245, received from Cluny the extremely rare privilege of having an abbot of its own, who duly became a lord of the Scottish Parliament.

Cluny was to know much unpeace in connexion with Pontius de Melgueil, a godson of Pope Pascal II, who had himself been a monk of that house. Pontius was elected Abbot in 1109, and for a time ruled with some success. But apparently the dominating position which he held in Christendom entirely turned his head. Not content with giving offence to many of the Burgundian bishops, he attempted definitely to establish his supremacy over the Abbot of Monte Cassino as the head of the monastic world.

Cluny was wealthier than the older house and it had the advantage of being at the head of a great and rising order, but it had never been associated with anyone at all to be compared with S. Benedict. The claim was perhaps in accordance with the soaring ambition of Cluny, but it was very ill-advised and eventually Pontius was forced to resign and go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

The monks of Cluny elected in his place (after another who almost immediately died) the greatest of all the line of abbots and one of the most admirable and genial men of mediæval times, Pierre de Montboisier, generally known as Peter the Venerable. Vigorously he set himself to the task of restoring prosperity to the sadly desolated house, and

things were beginning to improve when a chain of new troubles made them again still worse.

Pontius had been finding his residence in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem an insupportable exile. And so to Cluny he returned, not in the garb of a penitent but at the head of a body of troops. Having stormed the Abbey, he paid his brigand followers from the spoils of the very church, and resumed his old position in a very novel way.

He contrived to maintain himself in infamous prosperity for the space of about eight months. Then he had to submit to a Papal decree declaring that as a usurping, sacrilegious, schismatic, and excommunicate person he was deposed from the position he had long ceased to adorn.[16]

This extraordinary scandal was the occasion at least in part of S. Bernard's famous "Apology" concerning the shortcomings of the monks, and particularly the Cluniacs.[17] He begins with some criticisms of the Cistercians and a profession of real friendliness for the older order. But many features of their life are most unsatisfactory. Meals are sumptuous, well-cooked, and so varied that "even when the stomach complains that it is full, curiosity is still alive." [18]

Instead of the reading at meals that S. Benedict prescribed (p. 80) small talk and laughter fill the air. There is a choice of several kinds of wine and the fact that the Rule prescribes "a little" is ignored. The markets of town after town have to be ransacked to find cloth enough for the

[16] Peter the Venerable, *De Miraculis*, Lib. II, cap. xii, Migne, *P.L.* 189, col. 922-924.

[17] *Apologia ad Guillelmum Sancti Theoderici abbatem*, Migne, *P.L.* 182, col. 895 seq.

[18] A study of the existing remains at Dunfermline seems clearly to show that the huge and magnificent kitchen was common to the royal palace and the great Augustinian Abbey which enshrined S. Margaret's remains. "Matthew of Westminster," anno 1303, indignantly describes the place as one where the chief nobles of Scotland were wont to meet to arrange their designs against the king of England, implying that it was far more fortress than monastery and therefore fair game in war.

dress of the monks, and the religious are clothed in a manner that emperors or kings would not disdain.

Manual labour is done by servants. The pomp of the Abbot is beyond all bounds: "I have seen an Abbot with sixty horses after him, and even more. Would you not think, as you see them pass, that they were not fathers of monasteries, but lords of castles—not shepherds of souls, but princes of provinces?

"Then there is the baggage, containing tablecloths, and cups, and basins, and candlesticks, and well-filled wallets,—not with the coverlets, but the ornaments of the beds. My lord Abbot can never go more than four leagues from his house without taking all his furniture with him, as if he were going to the wars, or about to cross a desert where necessaries cannot be had. Is it quite impossible to wash one's hands in, and drink from, the same vessel? Will not your candle burn anywhere but in that gold or silver candlestick of yours which you carry with you? Is sleep impossible except upon a variegated mattress, or under a foreign coverlet?" [19] The magnificence of the buildings is extremely excessive (p. 230); the effect of the splendid services was heightened by great trees of brass glittering by their jewels quite as much as by their numerous candles.

The Cluniacs had started out with greatly lengthened services but not with any strong effort to increase the Benedictine standard of asceticism. It seems clear from the testimony of S. Bernard himself that even in the early twelfth century the monasteries—at any rate, some of those belonging to the Cluniac order—were already becoming those pleasant clubs of which Chaucer's monk was a typical inmate—not a saint but a country gentleman and pleasant, friendly neighbour.

For centuries yet the cloister was to attract a large proportion of the best intellects of Europe. A mediæval "Who's

[19] Trans. by J. C. Morison, *Saint Bernard*, p. 130.

Who" would very largely have been made up of monastic names, at least into the fifteenth century.

The letters of Peter to S. Bernard are couched in an exceedingly conciliatory spirit. He addresses the Abbot of Clairvaux as "most dear brother," wishing him eternal salvation, and according to his usual custom he describes himself as the humble Abbot of Cluny. In courtesy he certainly has the better of Bernard, but hardly in argument.

He cannot deny the substantial truth of most of the allegations, but he says they are of relatively minor importance. Probably he would himself have liked to tighten up Cluniac discipline to something nearer the Cistercian standard.[20]

With him the great Abbots of Cluny come to an end. Leadership, though not the same power, was to pass to the rising order of the Cistercians. From 1528, the Dukes of Guise held the great Abbey as commendatory Abbots. By the French revolutionary mobs its buildings were wrecked and part of what is left of the proud church is now built up into the houses of the little town.

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Vita Odonis a Joanne monacho, discipulo suo, is printed in Migne. *P.L.* 133; *Vita sancti Maioli, auctore Syro monacho,* Migne. *P.L.* 137. The works of Peter the Venerable are in Migne, *P.L.* 189.

There are very numerous modern works that deal in part with Cluny, especially the controversy between S. Bernard and Peter the Venerable. Maitland, *Dark Ages,* has much of the charm of early Victorian scholarship in the early days of the Oxford Movement.

[20] The letters are printed in Migne, *P.L.* 189. S. R. Maitland, *Dark Ages,* Nos. xxii, xxiii, defends the Cluniacs. G. G. Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion,* vol. i, ch. xxi, with a very much wider knowledge of the original documents, is inclined to support the Cistercians.

CHAPTER IX

SAINT BERNARD AND THE CISTERCIANS

There is no real evidence that the Cluniacs ever aimed at any more stringent asceticism than the Rule of S. Benedict contemplates. It was largely as a protest against their splendour that the Cistercian reforms began. Neither of these great orders had a particular rule, being merely Benedictine developments.

It was in that part of Burgundy that surrounds Dijon, the chief seat of the dukes, on whose southern border stands Cluny itself, that the new order came into being. To it we are indebted for some of the most beautiful ruins on the earth, and many of these are in the British Isles.

The early suppression of the abbeys in those parts has had the satisfactory, though certainly undesigned, result of preserving large portions of the original mediæval buildings, for on the Continent nearly every important house reconstructed all but the church in the far less picturesque style of the Renaissance. By a law dating from the very beginnings of the order, its houses were never to be in towns. They were so frequently in low-lying spots as to give vogue to the couplet:

> Bernardus[1] valles, montes Benedictus amabat,
> Oppida Franciscus, celebres Dominicus urbes.

Of course there are many exceptions, but Durham and Monte Cassino, dominating great stretches of country from

[1] So prominent in early Cistercian days as frequently to be regarded as the founder of the order.

their hill-tops, are typical Benedictine houses; Tintern or Rievaulx, nestling beside a stream in a valley with hanging woods to shut out the world, are what we look for in the houses of Cistercians; the latter is in so narrow a vale that the church (contrary to all northern custom) had to be built north and south because the space between the river and the hillside left no room for it to stand in the usual orientation.

In the northern portion of the monastic holy land of Burgundy, the country of famous abbeys, in 1075, a rich convent at Molesme had been founded. S. Robert was its Abbot, S. Alberic its Prior, when to it came an Englishman from Sherborne in Dorset. Stephen Harding was his name. He was like-minded with the Abbot and the Prior, but the other monks were not. Molesme was growing in wealth, but its inmates were not growing in grace, and the stricter brethren became earnestly desirous of leading a severer life.

So they retired to Vivier; but the other monks strongly objected to this desertion and so the pioneers of the austerer life were induced to return to Molesme. Matters, however, did not improve. Dispensations permitted one modification of the rules after another. It was very clear that no vigorous enforcement of the Benedictine Rule was possible at Molesme.

So, fortified by a special authorization from the Papal legate (Hugo, Archbishop of Lyons), the reforming monks retired to the wild wastes of Citeaux, a few miles south of Dijon, a forbidding spot that was destined to immortal fame. Odo, the Duke of Burgundy, who had a palace in the same vicinity, confirmed the grant of a site which was made by the lord of Beaume. So there, on March 21, 1098, was inaugurated the new monastery of S. Mary. Alberic became Abbot and Stephen Prior, but by order of Urban II (at a synod which assembled in Rome during the Eastertide of 1099), S. Robert was sent back to Molesme.

The new house prospered fairly well. Rules of much

rigidity were framed. Manual work in the fields, which was entirely below the dignity of the monks of Cluny, was taken up once more. Citeaux was to become a great centre for monastic farming; the sheep-runs of its order were to be known all over Europe. But this was neither planned nor foreseen; indeed what was deemed a sheet-anchor against wealth was thrown out in the refusal to accept those parochial tithes which so many benefactors had presented to the Benedictine convents, and which were in many cases the backbone of their resources.

When Alberic died, in 1109, Stephen succeeded him as Abbot, and in that capacity he attended the Council of Troyes (p. 199). So intense was his zeal for poverty and simplicity that he actually refused to allow the periodic visits to Citeaux even of the premier duke of Christendom, Hugo, the successor of Odo.

This step was the more significant as Odo, who had died on a crusade, in 1102, was buried in the abbey church. Stephen had a very just presentiment that he must make a definite choice between the constant presence of princes in the cloister and a rigidlly ascetic life for the community.

Such rigour did not appeal to all. Cistercian novices were few. Citeaux was before long in a most depressed material state. Many of the monks had died. Funds were running low. Despite the excellent beginnings made, it is quite possible that the house would have had no more distinguished a career than hundreds of other abbeys scattered over Europe, but that its reputation for asceticism and, indeed, its very misfortunes, were a keen attraction to certain serious minds. In 1114, a party of novices came to be admitted, including one of the greatest men of any age.

It was to be the peculiar glory of Cistercianism to nurture, and to be moulded by, one of the few men who in different centuries since the fall of the Roman Empire may be said to have ruled Europe. And in many respects he was the most

remarkable ruler that Europe ever knew. Unlike Hildebrand and Innocent III, he held no high office in the Church. Unlike Louis XIV and Napoleon, he was unsupported by a single gun. Unlike Barbarossa and Frederick II, he inherited no great office which shed a lustre upon its possessor to the very bounds of Christendom.

Unlike the great Abbots of Cluny, he ruled not as the holder of an elevated post but purely from the force of his own character. Unlike almost all other leaders of every time, he incurred the awful curse of Nietzsche on those who have the power to rule, but not the will.[2] He might have sat in S. Peter's chair. He was begged to accept the command of an army in which kings and an emperor served, and which was perhaps the most imposing that Europe up to that time had ever raised.

Rude and untutored in every way the twelfth century doubtless was, but when we look round on the force-respecting world in which our own lot is cast, we must incline our heads in quiet homage to an age that insisted upon being ruled by simple goodness; that in every great crisis placed the reins in the hands of one whose pure character was a compelling force before which all who ever met it—from Pope and emperor to the poorest churl—bowed in a reverent awe that is impressive even across the vicissitudes of more than seven centuries.

Of all the world's great leaders, S. Bernard of Clairvaux depends for his greatness more than any other on pure saintliness. He was in the very truest sense the mouthpiece of the ideal aspirations of the age in which he lived. His sermons and his letters are full of the superiority of the work of serving God in the cloister to any other duty, the eternal song of monasticism.

No better man ever trod this earth. It is not presumptuous overmuch to compare his character even with that of the

[2] *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, p. 215, English ed.

Incarnate Son of God Himself. Born in a castle, heir at will to a fair domain, brought up by a saintly mother, he was utterly unmoved by any care for the pomp of power, the luxury, or even the most ordinary comforts of this present world. Communing with his God in quiet prayer and meditation meant for him what it has meant for few.

So entirely was he wrapped up in the heavenly vision that on one occasion he rode for a whole day along the shores of the Lake of Geneva without noticing even the splendid sheet of water beside the road. William of S. Thierry (p. 153), his enthusiastic biographer, tells us: "I remained with him for a few days (at Clairvaux), unworthy though I was, and in whatever direction I turned my eyes I wonderingly saw as it were a new heaven and a new earth, and the foot-paths of the ancient monks of Egypt, our fathers, with the steps of the men of our own time in them. The golden age appeared to have returned at Clairvaux when men once rich and honoured in the world were glorying in the poverty of Christ." [3]

Perhaps, indeed, the saintliness of S. Bernard stands out in all the clearer light because in some respects it was buttressed by but little earthly vision. He forced a half unwilling continent to rush into the disastrous Second Crusade against the best judgment of very many whose opinions were entitled to respect. The last of the Fathers, he entirely repudiated the scholastic speculations of Abélard, and yet so failed to realize the future direction of Ultramontane orthodoxy that he combated the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, and in his letters speaks to Popes with decidedly less deference than modern conceptions would demand.

Such prosperity and such numbers now came to Citeaux that colonies were sent out to settle daughter houses. In

[3] *Vita Prima*, cap. VII; Migne, *P.L.* 185a, col. 247.

1114, Hugh, once lord of Mâcon but now a humble monk, led a band to found Pontigny (p. 120) and next year S. Bernard led another to Clairvaux—both in the same Burgundian land of monasteries that included also Citeaux, Cluny, and Molesme.

The daughter houses were not made independent, but formed the nucleus of the new Cistercian order, far less centralized than that of Cluny, but binding the daughters to the mother house in a way that the Benedictines did not.

Our Lady was the patron of the whole order; to her every house was dedicated, and on one occasion Christ was said to have spared the world for the sake of her Cistercian friends.

In 1116, the first General Chapter was held, and at that of 1119 was drawn up the *Carta Caritatis,*[4] a constitution providing for a yearly General Chapter of all the Abbots of the order at Citeaux, whose Abbot was given a most commanding position, but not the autocracy that belonged to his brother of Cluny.

In these early years the real headquarters of Cistercianism was not the mother house. From his cell and his arbour at Clairvaux S. Bernard was ruling a continent, and that in a truer sense than many a crowned king.

We visualize rather the ante-room of an emperor's palace than a poor little abbey in a passage from one of Bernard's letters to Peter the Venerable: "I grieved that I was not able to answer according to my feelings; because the evil of the day, which was great, called me away. For a vast multitude, out of almost every nation under heaven, had assembled. It was my place to answer every one; because for my sins I was born into the world that I might be confounded with many and multifarious anxieties." [5]

[4] Migne, *P.L.* 166, col. 1377.

[5] *Letter* quoted in No. XXV, Maitland's *Dark Ages*, p. 432. The letter was by the hand of his secretary, Nicholas.

It may be doubted whether in the whole course of history any leader supported neither by force nor by high office ever gained the confidence of Europe as did S. Bernard. In 1130, after the death of Honorius II, two rival Popes were elected, and in such circumstances that it was really a debatable question which was more canonically chosen. Europe was divided. Anacletus II was in firm possession of Rome and had been a Cluniac monk. He had received a majority of the votes of the cardinals, but his rival, Innocent II, had been elected first.

A council was summoned to Étampes by the French king, Louis VI. Christendom might easily have been torn and the great schism anticipated but that a man was there who commanded the confidence of all.

To Bernard the question was referred. It is extremely characteristic of the man that his decision was not swayed by any sort of expediency but based solely on the merits of the case. After a careful enquiry into all the circumstances of the election, and influenced, it appears, still more by the characters of the two men, he declared for the candidate who materially was the weaker. He pronounced Innocent to be the true Pope.

The council instantly accepted the decision. Europe did not. It required the personal intervention of S. Bernard to induce Henry II of England and the Emperor Lothaire to recognize the Pope he had chosen, but no one could ever resist the iron will and the stern and saintly character of the unbending Abbot of Clairvaux.

Nothing can be better evidence of this than the fact that the powerful King Roger of Sicily, a violent partisan of Anacletus, feared to meet S. Bernard face to face, especially after he had travelled through Italy in a series of triumphal marches in the interests of his Pope, reconciling Pisa with Genoa and many other rivals with each other, dominating a council at Pisa, and even winning over the great city of

Milan, whose archbishop had been strong for Anacletus.[6] Not till the death of the antipope was the matter finally disposed of, but his feeble successor was easily prevailed upon by S. Bernard to make his submission to Innocent.

The First Crusade had set up the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem (p. 199), but its subsequent fall had made it very evident that only by constant support from Europe could its existence be made secure. The zeal that Pope Urban II had kindled at Clermont had largely died away. There was a strong feeling that further attempts would not be well advised. But to S. Bernard all mere worldly considerations were utterly base. To his pure and unspotted devotion the insults that infidels were offering to the very places where his Master had trod, overbore all else that could be urged. He was fired by a new enthusiasm as holy as it was pure, and through a great part of Europe his fervid character lit up again the flames that had burned a generation before.

With the same enthusiasm as at Clermont, all classes put on the cross. S. Bernard's success in Germany was all the more remarkable that the great bulk of his hearers could not understand his language, but yielded to a personal magnetism that the world never saw excelled.

It must have been one of the most impressive scenes in all history when at Mass in the cathedral at Spires, moved by a sudden impulse to deliver an impassioned address, S. Bernard induced the reluctant Emperor, Conrad III, to take the cross. The sovereign was moved to tears and promised to go, before the vast congregation, which broke forth into uncontrollable enthusiasm.[7]

The Second Crusade was extremely disastrous, as those rare enterprises in which Germans and French march side by side are somewhat apt to be. As moral unity was needed

[6] *Vita Prima*, Lib. secundus; auctore Ernaldo, abbate Bonæ-vallis, caps. I, II; Migne, *P.L.* 185a, col. 268 seq.
[7] *Vita Prima*, cap. IV; Migne, *P.L.* 185a, cols. 381-382.

more even than military skill, it is by no means impossible that if S. Bernard had accepted the command and injected into every crisis of difficulty and peril his own marvellous personality, the result might have been different. He showed himself personally unmoved by the unpopularity that he inevitably incurred when the shattered and discredited remnants of the splendid armies of Christendom straggled back to their homes. He tried to justify the ways of Heaven by the ordinary argument that we can see but very little of the great designs of God.

The extremely far-reaching influence of S. Bernard was shown when, in 1140, he successfully intervened to prevent a nephew of King Stephen being elevated to the archbishopric of York. The rival, Henry Murdach, died in possession of the see, but the king was furious, and it was in connexion with this matter that the friends of his nephew William laid waste the great Cistercian abbey of Fountains, giving occasion for the erection of the magnificent conventual buildings whose ruins today form one of the most complete religious houses that the Middle Ages have bequeathed to our own generation.

In a way, perhaps, the climax of S. Bernard's life was his famous encounter with Abélard at the Council of Sens in 1140.[8] The two men were both of noble birth and both were monks, but there all resemblance ceased. S. Bernard was, tried by every imaginable standard, the very finest flower of monasticism. Abélard was singularly unfitted to the cloister, brilliant, erratic, and restless, far too much interested in life to have any real desire to abandon the world. S. Bernard's whole soul was with the past; he ends the long line of the Fathers of the Church. Perhaps no one who ever lived felt with more perfect sincerity that heaven was his true home.

[8] This was held in the *Senonensem Metropolitanum*, probably the existing cathedral still unfinished at the time. See *Vita Prima*, Lib. III, auctore Gaufrido, cap. V; Migne, *P.L.*, 185a, cols. 310-311.

Abélard, with his fearless speculation, boldly faced the future, anticipating very much of the spirit of the modern world. S. Bernard was a devout Churchman who counted doubt a sin. Abélard was a keenly critical logician, treating S. Augustine himself with the utmost freedom, boldly asking: "How far are they worthy of attention who assert that faith is not to be built up or defended by reason?"

Yet that erratic Breton, so intensely human, in some respects at least, interests us far more than the sternly devout Burgundian. Abélard's youth in the Breton castle, with its intense eagerness for study, his conflict with William of Champeaux and brilliant career in the schools of Paris, his romantic marriage with the sweet and unselfish Héloïse, his daring but tactless questioning of the things his age held dearest, his restless wanderings, his founding of the Paraclete which eventually he made over to his wife with her nuns, his desperate resolve at one time to seek refuge and freedom among the Moslems, his old age spent in long meditation under the lime tree at Cluny, ever facing towards the Paraclete where Héloïse was living, his eventual burial there where his loving wife was to be laid to rest beside him, united in death after the long and sad separation of life—all form one of the most humanly interesting stories of mediæval years.

Cousin declares that Abélard was the chief founder of the philosophy of the Middle Ages.[9] His conceptualism, maintaining that by the faculty of pure thought, and not through the senses alone, we can and must form general ideas, provides a middle ground between nominalism and realism. In any philosophical discussion he might expect to be able very easily to carry S. Bernard beyond his depth. S. Bernard had come to Sens unwillingly, at the eager solicitation of his friends. The two men could find but little common ground.

[9] *Ouvrages Ined,* Introd., p. IV.

S. Bernard looked upon the faith as purely a matter of the heart. Abélard regarded Christianity as a series of theses to be argued about like any other problems in philosophy. A brilliant company had gathered, and many of them sympathized with Abélard.

But all his philosophy broke down at once. He could not any more than others stand up against the pure character and compelling personality of S. Bernard. After a deplorable effort, he broke down and merely stuttered that he appealed to the Pope. On his own principles it would seem to have been quite inconsistent. His condemnation was a foregone conclusion.

It is to the eternal credit of Cluny that Peter the Venerable offered him a home, and after his death he wrote a most sympathetic letter to Héloïse ascribing to divine providence the fact that so honoured a philosopher and servant of Christ had enriched the abbey with a gift more precious than topaz and gold.[10]

Although the matter in dispute was relatively not very important, S. Bernard enjoyed no more striking personal triumph than he won over William, the Duke of Aquitaine.[11] This man was deemed one of the most formidable princes of his time, not only on account of his wide dominions and great military power, but also because of his gigantic strength and violent temper. He had expelled certain bishops from their sees and utterly refused to restore them.

No one seems to have dared to beard this lion and even S. Bernard in a long interview could do absolutely nothing to budge him. Dr. Storrs says: "It was almost like reasoning with a tropical storm, or addressing arguments to the brutal fierceness of a wild beast. S. Bernard broke off the

[10] *Epistolæ*, Lib. IV, xxi; Migne. *P.L.* 189, cols. 347-353.

[11] The incident is very fully described in *Vita Prima;* Lib. Sec. auctore Ernaldo, abbate Bonæ-vallis, cap. VI. Migne, *P.L.* 185a, cols. 289-291.

useless discussion and proceeded to the church to celebrate mass." [12]

Shortly he issued bearing with arms uplifted the sacred Host; with flashing face and burning eyes he again confronted the monster. He now asked if he would dare defy the very Judge of all the earth at Whose dread tribunal he must one day appear? Who was present in very truth in Bernard's hands. Amid the hushed awe of the assembled knights the prince quailed. He could not even stand. Meekly he bowed to the overmastering will of a man who physically was weak as he was strong. The bishops were immediately restored. The duke seems never to have recovered from the blow.

S. Bernard had added another to his many triumphs. And yet how utterly ashamed he would have felt could he have seen the future, when the grandson of that duke, Richard, Cœur de Lion, sarcastically told by the hermit Fulk de Neuilly to get husbands for his daughters, whose names were Luxury, Greed, and Pride, was able to make the withering retort: "The husband of Luxury shall be the prelates of Holy Church; of Pride the Knights Templars; Greed may most appropriately be wedded to the monks of the Cistercian order." [13]

There was possibly a little tinge of ingratitude in the last reference, seeing that, only three years previously, the Cistercians had been made to contribute a whole year's wool towards the ransom of the king.[14]

Great and marvellous indeed as S. Bernard's triumphs were, they had been strangely personal, curiously unconnected. He was the dictator of Europe in a truer sense, though less spectacular, than Napoleon. He had far more

[12] *Bernard of Clairvaux; the Times, the Man, and His Work*, by R. S. Storrs, p. 168.
[13] *Flores Historiarum*, 1197 A.D., *Rolls Series*, vol. ii, pp. 116-117 (from Hoveden).
[14] Matthew Paris, *Chronica Maiora*, vol. ii, p. 399.

power than he ever used. His authority ended only with his death, for moral force in the long run is invariably greater than material. He passed as greatly as he had lived; his career ended neither in St. Helena nor in Doorn.

He built his life into the noble structure of mediæval monasticism; yet for himself he reared no monument. It was the very last thing that he would have desired. In his lifetime none ever dared to stand up to him. Churls, knights, sovereigns, emperors, and even popes quailed before the compelling force of a character whose pure holiness gave to him much of the authority of an angel from above. But perhaps for that reason S. Bernard stands rather apart from the world. He handed down no great tradition. Even his own order soon ceased to be permeated by his spirit. (See p. 242.)

But although the extreme severity that was his ideal did not last very long, we get some most impressive proofs of its intensity in buildings that may still be studied. The original parts of Jerpoint Abbey in Ireland, dating from the middle of the twelfth century and so probably erected in S. Bernard's lifetime, are as severe as could possibly be wished.

The chapter house consists of a rude tunnel vault of the roughest rubble starting from the ground each side and presenting a most forbidding sense of gloom and darkness the moment it is entered. And amid the simple beauty of much of the later Cistercian work, the rude structures of the first generation of monks have in many places been preserved.

In S. Bernard's own lifetime, at the General Chapter of the Cistercians in 1152, there are hints that monks were beginning to eat flesh and that some houses were already engaging in gainful trade.[15] Owning vast estates, their houses exclusively in the open country, working hard with

[15] For details of this see Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, vol. i, p. 336.

their own hands, the monks of S. Bernard's order were soon widely known for their enormous commerce in wool. It was largely grown on their land in the north of England and shipped from the wharves of Norwich and other ports to the Flemish marts.

Posterity must be very grateful that they spent their money in raising those marvellous abbeys that give Yorkshire and many other parts of Europe what to many is their greatest charm; it may well be doubted if the great industries of today are preparing any similar heirlooms for future years.

Monastic history is full of the strangest paradoxes, and surely none is stranger than that the order which, under Stephen Harding and S. Bernard, so laboured to prevent even the most decent comfort for its zealous monks, should have become one of the most wealthy commercial corporations of all Europe, and indeed it may plausibly be argued that the Cistercian order was the chief pioneer of modern industrial capitalism. Largely at least it controlled the staple trade of the country whose chancellor sat on the woolsack. Kings complained of its greed.

One result of this agricultural and commercial spirit was a great development of Cistercian conversi, or lay brothers. Probably they were recruits who were unable to be monks because they could not read nor write. They had their separate quarters in the west side of the cloister with their own choir in the nave of the church. Their labour greatly enriched the order—with the inevitable result. The Benedictine custom of pittances, or extra dishes provided for on particular days by special endowments, appeared in Cistercian houses. In many of their ruined dwellings may be studied the misericord or chamber in which meat might be eaten—in the refectory strictly forbidden—and the second kitchen in which it might be cooked.

The story of the Cistercian order in later days is much the

same as that of others. Richelieu was at one time Abbot in commendam of Citeaux, which practically meant that he took the revenues but had no duties to perform. He failed, despite a vigorous effort, to bring about any real reform. Yet from within this order was a movement to rise, going back to the utmost vigour of earliest years, and forward to a new and excellently useful sphere.

A convent in Normandy at La Trappe had been founded in 1140. Its commendatory Abbot in the seventeenth century (Aimend Jean de Rancé) became its regular Abbot in 1664, and he set on foot a reform that carried asceticism further than the West had known before—at least in permanent form.

Strict silence, the hardest work, and the plainest fare kept away all but the very most earnest souls. Eventually a virtually new order emerged and it carried its work over all the world. At Marianhill in Natal it still maintains one of the most interesting of all the missions to the negro race. In its church, the Bantu are invited to kneel before a black Madonna. In 1898, the Trappist monks restored the ruined convent at Citeaux to its earliest use.

It is apt to be while musing amid the enchanting creeper-clad ruins of some Cistercian house, such as Fountains, that one falls in love with monasticism. Great banks of trees shut out the troubles of the world; the murmuring stream is whispering of peace. The size and beauty of the conventual buildings witness to a solid comfort, and the great chimney of the warming house seems to suggest a pleasant social life. The quiet cloister breathes the atmosphere of peace, and the long-drawn broken arches of the vast and lofty church invite to quiet prayer.

How the place must have been loved by the really earnest-minded monk to whom the early green of spring and the autumn golds and russet browns of the surrounding woods, and the wild flowers and butterflies and birds seemed a

foretaste of that eternal paradise to which the abbey was the gate.

Such may be the inevitable reflexions of the modern tourist —not of the mediæval monk. It is rather a shock to find Matthew Paris relating the story of certain strict monks of S. Mary's, York, coming *"ad quendam locum horroris et vastæ solitudinis scilicet in convallem profundam et opacem"* in that terribly forbidding spot to found the Abbey of Fountains.[16]

From mediæval writings it is very clear that the monks preserved to the end the old ideals of the Egyptian desert. Even in later times, but very typical of the mediæval mind, we find S. John of the Cross, the Carmelite mystic, exclaiming: "The spiritual Christian ought to suppress all joy in created things, because it is offensive in the sight of God.[17] In his real and genuine love of the beauties of this world the great S. Basil stands almost alone among monks (p. 40).

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[16] *Chron.,* Mai, 1127.

[17] *Ascent of Mt. Carmel,* bk. III, ch. 19.

CHAPTER X

THE RISE OF THE FRIARS

Dean Milman has said: "It was this wonderful attribute of the monastic system to renew its youth, which was the life of mediæval Christianity; it was ever reverting of itself to the first principles of its constitution.[1]

The context is S. Bernard and the Cistercians. The observation appears to be even more justified in connexion with the rise of the friars, associated as that is with the career of the figure in monastic story that appears to interest the modern world far more deeply than any other, S. Francis of Assisi [2]. One of his own disciples, Father Cuthbert, has called him, "the most inspiring personality in mediæval Christendom." [3] His story is an oft told tale. His father was disappointed and indeed disgusted that a boy of such unusual promise would not attempt to gain success in the conventional paths of the world.

S. Francis might indeed by doing that have kept the goodwill of the folk of an obscure little town, have lived respected and died lamented, but to the world unknown.

By following the rough paths along which his own conscience beckoned, that boy has given associations to the little town that have made Assisi one of the best known spots on

[1] *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. iv, p. 156 (bk. VIII, ch. iv).

[2] G. K. Chesterton has recently entered the field with a little book, *St. Francis of Assisi*. No other monastic saint has so many popular lives in English.

[3] Chapter in *The Lady Poverty*, ed. by Montgomery Carmichael, on *Spiritual Significance of Evangelical Poverty*, p. 144.

earth, has added to Christianity traditions as imperishable as any of older date, has founded a religious order that, not content with a vigorous revival from end to end of Christendom, has carried the Gospel in a literal sense from China to Peru, and has gained for himself a name and a fame that is hardly equalled by that of any saint since apostolic days. The happy romanticism of youth he made a possession of the Church for all the ages that were to come.

The study of his life enables one to realize something of the spirit in which the authors of the *Song of the Three Holy Children* felt so lively a brotherhood with all created things.

In most respects, indeed, S. Francis was a typical inheritor and reinterpreter of the ancient monastic tradition, but he was very much more. His feeling of fellowship with all nature brought a new and splendid joyousness, not merely into the inheritance of asceticism, but into the very worship of the Church itself. Everything from the sun downward he felt to be a brother or a sister.[4]

In the sermon which he preached to the birds,[5] he seems to revive and in a manner to consecrate anew one of the very oldest traditions of Christian monasticism. "My little sis-

[4] An extremely valuable critical work on the subject is *Saint Francis of Assisi and His Legend*, by Nino Tamassia. The Paduan professor points out how very largely Thomas of Celano (author of the *Dies Iræ*), the chief original authority for the life of S. Francis, plagiarises from such earlier monastic writers as Gregory the Great, Sulpicius Severus, and Cassian. His English translator, Lonsdale Ragg, does not consider that this very materially affects the credibility of the actual incidents, seeing that all monastic (and other) lives of the saints are couched in most strikingly similar language. Very much the same might be said of much of the original literature concerning S. Ignatius Loyola in post-mediæval times. In truth, there is no need to stop at the frontiers of Christendom. The story of S. Francis of Assisi has many points of resemblance with that of Buddha. It is impossible to read of such Japanese religious men as Kobo Daishi, and to listen to the local legends that are still told about his life, without being reminded of many of the Christian saints. The early Jesuits knew well how to use such resemblances.

[5] *Fioretti* (*Little Flowers*), 16.

ters, birds, much bounden are ye unto God, your Creator, and alway in every place ought ye to praise him, for that He hath given you liberty to fly about everywhere, and hath also given you double and triple raiment; still more are ye beholden to Him for the element of the air which He hath appointed for you; beyond all this, ye sow not neither do ye reap; and God feedeth you, and giveth you the streams and fountains for your drink, the mountains and valleys for your refuge, and the high trees whereon to make your nests."

S. Francis has sometimes, but quite unfairly, been accused of pantheism. Such things can be said only by those unfamiliar with monastic traditions. The monk has ever felt the brotherhood of birds and beasts (p. 19). S. Francis imported a love of nature that is largely his own, though to some degree he shares it with Anselm and Hugh of Lincoln. In S. Francis, it is not so much the love of scenery that S. Basil felt (p. 40) as a most intense sentiment of fellowship with beasts and flowers and birds.

Monks and friars [6] are in these days very often confounded as if they were practically the same. That would have been impossible in Chaucer's age, but it was common by the time of Luther. The very words explain what the essential difference was. The monk was supposed to live alone, to meditate and pray, the friar to live in brotherly relations with the world.

Indeed the friars, unlike the earlier orders, were instituted to do a special work, not merely to save their own souls. Theirs it was to minister to the outcast, to seek the downtrodden and the afflicted, in fact to supplement the work of the parish clergy. The message of the monk had been communal, setting an example of ordered social life

[6] The four orders of friars, mentioned in Chaucer's *Prologue*, were Franciscans, Grey Friars, or Minorites; Dominicans, Black Friars, or Friars Preachers; Carmelites, or White Friars; Austin or Eremite Friars.

that had made an immense appeal to the whole world of Northern Christendom (p. 177).

The appeal of the friar was far more individual. There can be no doubt that the friars helped to bring about in the thirteenth century a remarkable religious revival, but the great movement that was mainly responsible for the era of cathedral building came very largely from the laity.

The espousals of S. Francis with the Lady Poverty is superbly represented on the vault of the lower church at Assisi, and yet amidst such magnificent surroundings not entirely without a suggestion of satire. The conception reflects the atmosphere in which the friars were to live. S. Benedict refused to permit the monks to own anything at all, but this had been rendered largely nugatory as the convents might hold property to any extent.

So S. Francis would permit neither friar nor order to own property of any sort. The devoted lives of the friars were so to be approved of all men that necessary provisions should never fail, and anything more was to be avoided. The friars were to live by begging, and so if they ceased to be popularly approved they could not live at all.

Like SS. Pachomius, Basil, Augustine, and Benedict of old, S. Francis found a woman to share his ideals and to interpret them to her own sex; not, indeed, a sister, but the noble Clare. "She gave her heart to S. Francis and he, in turn, consecrated it to God." [7]

Each was in love with the other, but it was not an earthly love; for both of them the love of virginity and of the Saviour was an absorbing and overmastering passion, far stronger than any emotion of the world. Clare organized the friaresses at San Damiano as S. Francis organized the friars at the Portiuncula. She lived for many years after S. Francis was dead; the influence of the poor Clares reached far beyond the limits of the order.

[7] Fr. Robinson, *Life of St. Clare*, p. 36.

In reading the Rule of S. Francis [8] one is struck by the marked absence of that clear Roman love of order which is so prominent in the Rule of S. Benedict. "The rule and life of the brothers minor is this, to observe and keep the holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, living in obedience without property and in chastity."

Only the provincials [9] may receive new brethren. "And in nowise it may be lawful to them to forsake this religion, after and according to the commandment of the Pope, for, after the saying of the holy gospel, no man putting his hand to the plow and looking backwards is apt to the kingdom of heaven. * * * And all the brethren must be clothed with simple and vile clothing. And they may piece them and amend them with pieces of sackcloth, or with other pieces with the blessing of God.

"The clerks shall do their divine service after the order or use of the holy Church of Rome. * * * And they shall pray for them that be dead. And they shall fast from the feast of all hallowtide unto the nativity of our Lord. * * * I counsel also warn and exhort my brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ that they brawl not * * * but that they be meek, peaceable, soft, gentle, and courteous and lowly, honestly speaking and answering to every man as unto them [10] accordeth and belongeth. And they shall not ride, but if they be constrained by evident necessity or else by sickness.

"I command steadfastly and straitly to all the brethren that in nowise they receive any manner of coin or money, but care shall be taken of the sick.

"The brethren to whom God hath given grace and strength

[8] It has come down in several forms. I have used an early English translation, printed in *Monumenta Franciscana, Rolls Series*, vol. ii, p. 65, from the fifteenth century Cottonian MS., *Fustina* D. IV, R. Howlett, ed. I have modernized the spelling.

[9] That is an officer charged with the oversight of all the monasteries of a certain district, more or less answering to a bishop in the secular Church.

[10] It is interesting to note that this common grammatical blunder is as old as the fifteenth century.

to labour, shall labour truly and devoutly, so and in such wise that Idleness, the enemy of the soul, excluded and put away, they quench not the inward fervour and spirit of holy prayer and devotion.

"The brethren shall nothing appropriate to them, neither in housing nor in lands, nor in rent nor in any manner of thing, but like pilgrims and strangers in this world, in poverty and meekness, serving Almighty God. They shall faithfully, boldly and surely and meekly go for alms. Nor they shall not nor ought to be ashamed, for our Lord made Himself poor in this world. * * * This should be your portion the which will lead you to the land of quick and living people. To which my most well-beloved brethren, utterly knit and conjoined, you shall never desire other thing under Jesus for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.[11]

"The brethren shall not preach in the diocese of any bishop when it is of him to them forbidden, and none of the brethren shall be so bold to preach to the people, but if he be of the general minister of this brotherhood examined, approved, and admitted of him to the office of preaching.

"And those that be unlearned shall not busy themself to be lettered and learned; but they should attend and take heed above all things, and desire to have the sprite of our Lord and his holy operation to pray always to almighty God with a pure spirit and a clean heart."

The friars must never enter nunneries unless by special permission from Rome. "Nor they may not be godfathers or gossips of men or women, lest thereby rumour or slander should rise of the brethren amongst the brethren.

"Whosoever of the brethren, by divine inspiration, will go among the Saracens or other infidels they shall axe license thereof of their ministers provincial."

The ideal is admirably illustrated in the "Sacrum Com-

[11] For certain details as to the government of the order here provided, see p. 196.

mercium,[12] or the Marriage of St. Francis with the Lady Poverty," written probably in the fourteenth century by some author entirely unknown, presumably a Franciscan friar. It is a charming allegory about the origin of the new order. Avarice, the great rival of the Lady Poverty, has captured the older orders, taking the name of Discretion.

"After a time some of the religious began to sigh most lamentably for the flesh-pots of Egypt which they had left behind. * * * In short, they began to fawn upon the world, striking bargains with worldlings. * * * They enlarged their buildings and multiplied those things they had for ever renounced. * * * They eagerly frequented the courts of kings and princes that they might join house to house and lay field to field."

We then get a most scathing denunciation of the monks from a source that cannot possibly be accused of anti-clericalism. But some allowance must be made for the rivalries of different orders.

In startling contrast to that of the degenerate monks is the way of life of the friars. They ask the Lady Poverty to a meal. "But she said unto them: 'Show me first your Oratory, the cloister and chapter house, the refectory, kitchen, dormitory, and stables, your fine seats, and polished tables, and noble houses. For I see none of these things.'" To wash their hands they could only provide a broken vessel of water, for towel one of the brothers had to offer his habit. The table was spread—two or three crusts of barley bread—upon the grass.

The lady marvelled exceedingly and delightedly exclaimed: "Who ever saw the like in the generations of old." When asked for cooked food the brothers could only bring a basin of water in which to dip the bread. For savoury herbs from the garden no better substitute could be found

[12] This work is conveniently accessible in English, published by Montgomery Carmichael under the title, *The Lady Poverty*, 1902.

than bitter wild herbs from the woods. There was no salt to season them, nor even a knife to trim them. Wine there was none. When the Lady Poverty was weary she was obliged to rest upon the bare ground with only a stone for a pillow.

"So after she had slept for a brief space in peace she arose and asked the brothers to show her their cloister. And they, leading her to the summit of a hill, showed her the wide world, saying: 'This is our cloister.' " [13]

Delightedly bidding them all sit down, she praised them in the very highest terms: "Behold what I longed for I see, what I desired I hold, for I am joined to them that are a type on earth of Him to whom I am espoused in Heaven. * * * I pray and most earnestly beseech you as most dear sons to persevere; * * * not abandoning your perfection as is the manner of some. * * * Most high is your perfection, above man and the strength of man and it excels in brightness the perfection of your forefathers."

S. Dominic, a Spaniard who enjoyed the confidence of Popes, was much more a practical man of affairs than S. Francis, though by no means so interesting a figure. In many ways he was a great contrast to the Italian, far keener about learning but much less sympathetic with nature. Indeed on one occasion, in the manner of the old Egyptian monks, he saw the devil in a sparrow that was disturbing his studies and so he plucked it alive.[14]

A far happier incident in his life was his famous visit to a Franciscan chapter at the Portiuncula, when he was so much impressed that he went and knelt before the blessed Francis exclaiming, "Truly God hath taken care of these saintly little ones and I did not know it. Wherefore I now promise to observe holy evangelistic poverty, and I in God's name utter a malediction against all brethren of my order

[13] Ch. xxiv.
[14] Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, i, p. 179.

who in the said order shall presume to have possessions of their own."

S. Francis desired that his friars should win men to Heaven by their example; S. Dominic looked more to preaching. So keen was he that his disciples should excel in this that he became the first monastic legislator to dispense them from manual work; at Bologna he even proposed (though the Chapter did not agree to it) that all business details should be left to the conversi, to whom manual work was assigned. S. Benedict's stability was entirely set aside; the friar belonged to the order and must be free to go wherever his work would count for most.

The Dominicans did some service to the Church, but to civilization none, in the help they gave to Simon de Montfort the Elder in destroying the Albigensian heresy, which Cæsarius of Heisterbach [15] says had conquered a thousand cities and would if left alone have subjugated the whole of Europe.

The friars do not seem to have been primarily responsible for the methods used—as to which, the less said the better. The miserable desolation of Provence must always remain a sad blot on the story of the thirteenth century.

Besides the Franciscans and the Dominicans, there rose two other orders, making the four chief divisions of friars. Both Carmelites and Augustinians (or Austins) date back to earlier times, but are first prominently heard of in the thirteenth century.

The Carmelites are unique in professing an origin far antedating the birth of Christianity. They claim continuity with the Sons of the Prophets sponsored by Elijah and so take their name from Mount Carmel. It is not very easy to see why S. Elijah, of all men, should be so much the most prominent of the small number of Old Testament saints adopted into the Church's calendar. Many convents of the

[15] VI, 21.

Eastern Church bear his name and from his manner of leaving the earth he was chosen as the patron saint of the flying corps of the Tsarist armies—a capacity in which he appears to have been singularly unsuccessful.

A rule was apparently given to the Carmelites in 1209 by Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem. Not long afterwards they left Palestine, on the failure of the Crusades, and settled in the West, some travelling in the train of Richard, Earl of Cornwall (1241), the only English emperor, or rather king of the Romans.

The Austin friars or hermits, who, like the canons sharing the name, follow the rule of S. Augustine (p. 62), were formed by the consolidation of a number of small orders, united in 1255 by Alexander IV, who also annulled the bull of his predecessor which subjected all the mendicant orders to episcopal control (p. 27). The brethren of a small, but exceedingly vigorous, suborder were known as Sackites from the extraordinary simplicity of their attire.

The Austin vicar-general, Staupitz, under whom Luther was a friar, seems almost entirely to have anticipated the reformer in his doctrines about justification by faith,[16] but the order was never specially concerned with scholasticism.[17]

The friars, and particularly the Franciscans, did a very great service to humanity by a wide development of the use of lay-helpers. The so-called Tertiaries, or third order—the first and second being friars and friaresses—remained in the world and gave their spare time to good works.

In 1295, Boniface VIII permitted them to form regular congregations,[18] and this is contemplated in a much earlier

[16] This important question is very fully discussed by Prof. Köshlin (Halle) in his *Luther's Theology.*

[17] The Austins and Carmelites are hardly so significant as the Franciscans and Dominicans. Workman, in his admirable chapter *The Coming of the Friars,* says almost nothing about them, "as they do not illustrate any new ideas." *Evolution of the Monastic Ideal,* p. 315.

[18] *Manuale Historiæ ordinis fratrum minorum,* by P. Dre H. Holzapfel, p. 605.

rule of 1221, which is shorter and simpler than that for regular friars. It contemplates the Tertiaries' being either clerks or laymen; they must say the seven daily canonical hours, and they are bound by severe regulations as to fasting, and are restricted from bearing arms.[19]

Sometimes monasteries were founded for the third order. At Slane, on a ridge above the Boyne, in county Meath, Ireland, may still be seen the ruins of a convent founded for them as late as 1512 by Sir Christopher Fleming, the buildings fortified and grouped around a little uncloistered court.[20] The lay third order is also still maintained.

For a time the extraordinarily high standard with which the friars set out, or at least something near it, was well maintained. The bare-footed and extremely devoted Franciscans received the warmest welcome in every European country to which they turned their steps. Their refusal of anything beyond the barest necessities, the simple barn-like little chapels in which they prayed, the fervour with which they ministered to the poorest of the people, all seemed to bring back the purity of Christianity in its very earliest days.

Eccleston [21] gives many particulars of the great poverty of the first brothers who settled in England, and in London on one occasion had to keep a sick brother warm by all lying close together as is the manner of pigs. But the original idea of their having no homes whatever of their own proved impracticable even in the lifetime of S. Francis, and they soon built monasteries which were in most respects not very different from those of ordinary monks (p. 234). It is not

[19] *Regula Antiqua Fratrum et Sororum de Paenitentia, seu Tertii Ordinis Sancti Francisci*, ed. by Paul Sabatier, from a MS. in the library of the convent of Capistran in the Abruzzi. There is doubt as to the correctness of the date, 1221.

[20] The Tertiaries were placed under the Franciscan visitors by Nicholas IV, in 1290. *Bull. Unigenitus in Sbaralea, Bull. Franc.* IV, p. 167.

[21] Thomas de Eccleston, *de Adventu Minorum in Angliam* (in 1224) printed in vol. i, *Monumenta Franciscana, Rolls Series*, pp. 5-72.

easy to see how otherwise they could have trained novices and kept their order together at all.

We have some most inspiring testimonies to the unselfish zeal of the friars for righteousness which are all the more valuable because to a large extent delightfuly unconscious. Matthew Paris [22] relates how, in 1252, the king sent the Franciscans some woollen cloth, which they at once returned because he had taken it without payment from the merchants. A little later he tells us how they contrived to rescue certain Jews accused of the murder of a boy at Lincoln "from prison and the death which they deserved," even though it involved such unpopularity that the common people withheld their accustomed charity.[23]

The Burton annalist, however, attributes this saving of the Jews to the Dominicans: "Meanwhile, horrible to relate, the friars preachers, who, for love of the Crucified, have chosen poverty and professed a strict rule of life that by the example of good works and by the word of life they might save souls about to perish and rescue them from the jaws of hell, strove with all their might to save the rest of the Jews who were shut up in prison and deserved eternal damnation with the devil, seeing that they had no wish or intention to be converted to the faith of Christ. Hence it is amazing that they should attempt to save unbelievers from death, unless they wished to be converted and baptized.[24]

It certainly shows the friars in a most magnificent light, that they should dare to stand up against constituted authority in an unpopular cause and resist the strongest racial and religious prejudices of the mob.

This splendid zeal for poverty and righteousness was succeeded by one of the most remarkable revivals of learning that the Middle Ages ever witnessed (p. 217). The friars

[22] *Chron. Mai, Rolls Series.* V, 275-6.
[23] *Ib.*, V, 546.
[24] *Annales Monast., Rolls Series,* I, pp. 346-7.

also carried on a noble missionary work far beyond the boundaries of Europe (p. 181).

Meanwhile the intense difficulty of applying literally the strict rules of S. Francis to the conditions of the vastly expanding order gave rise to very considerable differences of opinion, and gradually two parties were formed, the stricter being known as spirituals. Even S. Bonaventura failed to find an acceptable compromise, and accordingly a division was made. Franciscans were classed as Observants and Non-observants.

By the efforts of S. Bernadine of Siena, the Observantines were given a vicar-general of their own, thus definitely dividing the Franciscan order into Observant and Conventual bodies. The Observantines were still divided among themselves; stricter bodies split off—Capuchins in Italy, Récollets in France, Alcantarines in Spain.

The relations between the friars and monks were usually strained, largely because of the popularity of the former with the people, and their aptness to draw unfavourable comparisons between the work done for them by the wealthy monks and by the poverty stricken friars. By the time the friars arose, the monks had certainly done much of their best work.

Not only were pious founders inclined to erect collegiate churches instead of further monasteries (see, nevertheless, p. 116), but the old houses were beginning to attract fewer neophytes. The arrival of the Franciscans in England is thus chronicled by one of the monks: "1224. *Eodem anno o dolor! O plus quam dolor! O pestis truculenta! Fratres minores venerunt in Angliam.*" [25]

At first the secular priests, and especially the more earnest of them, welcomed the friars who were able to do so much to improve the spiritual state of their parishes by their elo-

[25] *Chron. Petriburg,* by John, Abbot of Peterborough, ed. by J. Sparke, *Hist. Angl.,* Script. III, p. 102.

quent preaching and evangelistic piety. S. Francis himself had taught by word, and illustrated by example, that friars should be very humble toward the clergy: "We are sent," he used to say, "to help the clergy for the salvation of souls that whatsoever is found lacking in them may be supplied by us!" [26]

This feeling gradually changed as the friars became rivals rather than merely voluntary helpers, and especially when they took the fees that should have formed a large part of the incomes of the rectors.

In 1250, Innocent IV permitted the friars to bury in their churches and yards anyone who desired it, thus taking a most valuable source of income out of the hands of the parish priests, who now had nothing to offer that the friars could not duplicate, particularly as endowed chantries and Masses might be established in the churches of friars.[27]

It was felt that the goodness of the friars would greatly assist in their salvation all those found buried in their churches at the Day of Doom, and sometimes laity were actually in pious fraud laid to rest in friars' gowns.

Their extreme popularity had caused property to be almost forced upon them, and in England the custom of the community's holding it to the use of the friars did much to develop the notion of trusteeship. In other countries such possessions were frequently vested in the Pope.

Before very long, in all lands, the friars were ministering in magnificent minsters, superior to most parish churches, vast in dimensions, brilliant with painted glass, resplendent

[26] *Speculum Perfectionis, seu S. Francisci Assisiensis Legenda Antiquissima*, auctore Fratre Leone, IV, 54; Ed. by Paul Sabatier, pp. 92-93.

[27] Monks, friars, and secular priests are not infrequently found satirized in the carved details of churches belonging to their rivals. A fox dressed as a friar addressing a congregation of geese is to be seen in Norwich Cathedral, a Benedictine house. In Ludlow Church, Shropshire, which was always parochial, a misericord displays a monk sitting by his fire in a large arm-chair. Before him is a kettle on a fire, behind him hang two fat pigs.

with coloured frescoes, and variegated with the canopied tombs of wealthy and high-placed patrons. Brother Elias, who even in the lifetime of S. Francis had succeeded to the control of the order, erected at Assisi the splendid basilica that is one of the finest artistic monuments of Italy.

The Franciscan church of S. Croce, in Florence, is one of the noblest in the city, equalled only, perhaps, after the cathedral, by another friar church, the Dominican S. Maria Novella. Matthew Paris alleges that by the middle of the thirteenth century the convents of the friars rivalled the palaces of kings.[28] There is little in the way of archæological evidence to support this view, but plenty to corroborate the sneer of Piers Plowman a century later against those who wish to put their names on the stained windows of friars' churches:

> And sithen he seyde,
> We have a window in werkynge.
> Woldest thou glaze that gable,
> And grave there thy name,
> Nigher should thy soul be
> Heaven to have.

The vast Greyfriars Church in London (three hundred by eighty feet) with its pillars of marble and magnificent windows of coloured glass, built by queens, and nobles, and wealthy burgesses, was one of the finest buildings in the city. In 1461, when the fugitive Henry VI and his adherents were entertained by the Scots at Edinburgh, the place chosen was the Dominican Convent.[29]

Still, whatever faults they may have had, it was a splendid revival of monasticism that the friars brought about. They were ubiquitous; helping the parish clergy, ministering to the very outcasts, or serving as chaplains to kings; filling

[28] *Chron. Mai*, IV, 280.
[29] Hume Brown, *History of Scotland*, vol. i, p. 251.

bishops' sees—sometimes the Papal chair, sent on diplomatic missions,[30] rallying to Simon de Montfort in support of Parliament, patronizing and sometimes practising art, lecturing at the universities (p. 217)—ready for any sort of work that wanted men.

Sometimes, indeed, they are found acting in somewhat unexpected capacities. Thus, in 1378, some of the Irish Carmelites apparently undertook the duties of a regular garrison. In that year, Richard II made a grant in consideration of the great labour, burden and expense which the Priors of the Convent of Leighlin Bridge have and do sustain in supporting their house, and the bridge contiguous thereto, against the king's enemies.[31]

As the duty of guarding the bridge, which was on the high-road between Dublin and Kilkenny, is assigned to the Prior, it is possible that it was his duty to provide regular soldiers; but it appears more probable that military services were performed by the Carmelites in person. In any case, their convent in ruin is more like a castle than a priory.

As the Middle Ages wore on toward their end, the friars were doing very much to reassert that ascetic control of the world that had been the dominant feature of their first dawn. Father Cuthbert claims [32] that their vernacular preaching did much to promote the national literatures of Europe; the monks had done something along the same lines (p. 192), but certainly on a far smaller scale.

There is no doubt that the friars did something to popularize the church service on what would now be called "mission" lines. The Christmas Crib, and simple miracle plays, sought to make the events of the Church's year more real

[30] Thus, it was a Franciscan friar who was sent (indirectly) in 1317 by Pope John XXII to Robert Bruce, whom that sovereign declined to see, as he had to confess that his master declined to recognise him as king of Scots. There were abundant other instances.

[31] Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum*, art. *Leighlin*. On its suppression, the monastery was converted into a fort, regularly garrisoned.

[32] *Romanticism of St. Francis*, p. 180.

to the people. Hymn singing in the vernacular was another feature of the revival that the friars brought about. As late as the time of Shakespeare, popular ditties about them were current, one of which is used in the "Taming of the Shrew":

> It was the friar of orders grey,
> As he forth walked on his way.[33]

Despite the fact that the friars had by the time of the dissolution accumulated considerable property, it was trifling compared with that of the monks. They still lived by begging. Chaucer reproaches them not with wealth but with the hypocritical character of their mendicancy. But he specially says that his own friar was exceptional.

It is perfectly impossible not to feel that by the mid-fourteenth century the friars had lost their original ideals to a very great extent. Whatever allowance be made for exaggeration by Wyckliffe, Langland, and Chaucer, it is impossible merely to brush aside their references to friars. In Chaucer's "Prologue," as nowhere else at equal length, the Middle Ages live again. All the pilgrims fare alike; the foibles of lay folk and Church folk are treated with impartial hand.

Later on, all four orders were to experience a most splendid revival. Alone of the great mediæval orders the friars, and particularly the Franciscans and Dominicans, were to take a very leading part in the post-Renaissance revival of monasticism. A new sphere of usefulness was opened when their churches were made parochial—a common arrangement now.[34] They have carried the Gospel to many lands. They

[33] Act IV, Scene I, Petruchio's fourth speech.

[34] At any rate after the dissolution in England friars sometimes held parishes. In Lurgashall Church, Sussex, is preserved (in a copy made 1716) a declaration of the parishioners concerning land for the maintenance of a clerk dated 1567, containing the sentence: "a Fryer called Sr John was parson next after the said Sr Richard." It is printed in *Sussex Archæological Collections*, LXV, p. 257. 1924.

have founded colleges and schools. They have done as much as any to interpret Latin Christianity to the masses of today.

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For S. Dominic, the chief source is the *Record* by Jordan of

Saxony, ed. J. J. Berthier, Freiburg, 1891. The Bollandists, A.SS. Aug. 4th 359, seq., give a life in their well known series.

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CHAPTER XI

THE MONK AS MISSIONARY

It was not to be expected even in the earliest days that monastic enthusiasm would long remain contented in the actual cloister. The great world beckoned, heathenism challenged, and one of the first duties that monks took upon themselves was that of spreading the faith. It was chiefly from their lips that those who dwelt beyond the empire's bounds heard the Gospel in many regions of the world, from Scotland to Cathay.

Among the earliest, and in some respects the most remarkable, of these noble missionary labours was that which carried the faith, though in its Nestorian form, from the shores of the Mediterranean to those of the far distant Pacific.

More than twelve hundred years have passed away since a few poor monks began that task of evangelizing China, which even today makes but slow progress despite the earnest efforts of so many relatively wealthy missions, and the devoted lives of multitudes of well taught workers. In view of present day efforts to Christianize the Far East, the extremely successful monastic methods of dealing with the same problem before Alfred the Great was born, have an exceedingly special interest.

The spiritual followers of Nestorius, who clung to his teachings after their condemnation by the Council of Ephesus in 431, were largely of Syrian race. Nobly turning toward the rising sun, instead of disturbing the Roman Empire with further religious controversies on that particular point, the Syrian monks carried on a glorious missionary work,

which covered Asia with their bishoprics from Jerusalem to Peking, and from southern India to Turkestan. At the height of their prosperity they seem to have had no less than twenty-five metropolitan bishops under the Catholics or Patriarch, whose seat was at Seleucia-Ctesiphon, close to Baghdad.[1] The monks who "observing the course of the winds made their way to China through difficulties and perils," [2] must have been cheered by arriving at monasteries occupied by their brethren at the end of every few days' march. Layard saw a number of curious bowls from China in an ancient Nestorian church in a valley of Kurdistan, an interesting evidence of the former Asia-wide extent of a communion that has now only a few thousand members.

Most of our real knowledge of these missionaries in the Far East is derived from the now famous tablet at Si-ngan-fu which the Jesuits discovered in 1625, and which bears a date corresponding to 781 A.D. The genuineness of the monument was at one time a matter of great interest in Europe and was discussed by Voltaire and Renan. It admits of no serious dispute.

In all the long story of Christian missions, there is perhaps no single document that can compare with this one for interest, giving us an excellent idea of Nestorian methods of propaganda. As to the extent of their success, there is little evidence beyond the fact that in the T'ang capital (Si-ngan-fu) they had at one time about sixty clergy. With many vicissitudes their Church lasted till in the thirteenth century the Franciscans began to arrive, but it appears not seriously to have survived the downfall of Mongol power in 1368, when the native Ming dynasty was established.

The first part of the tablet sets forth the main truths of the Christian faith, asserting that the Wise Men came from

[1] A very good map of the metropolitan bishoprics of the Nestorian church is given in Colonel Yule's *Cathay and the Way Thither*, vol. iii, p. 23, last ed. Khanbalik (Peking) and Sin are in China.

[2] Expression used on the *Nestorian Tablet*.

Persia. It is remarkable that the Christian message is presented in language and in terms entirely familar to the Chinese. The writer was himself a Chinese, Ching-ching, evidently an excellent scholar. All three religions are conciliated.

The Jewish Prophets are called "sages"; the first man is said to have had bestowed upon him an excellent disposition superior to all others, exactly in the Confucian way; the Scriptures are called *sutras,* like the Buddhist sacred works. The Christian *Way* is emphasized in terms most familiar to the Taoists. Many other Chinese religious expressions are adopted; the whole inscription would be readily understood by any educated Chinese.

The noblest part of the Christian social message, especially as it was seen by the monks, is very well set forth. Christians "keep neither male nor female slaves. Putting all men on an equality they make no distinction between the noble and the mean. They neither accumulate property nor wealth; but giving away all they possess, they set a good example to others. They observe fasting in order that they may subdue 'the knowledge'. Seven times a day they meet for worship and praise and earnestly they offer prayers for the living and the dead (presumably this is in connexion with ancestor worship). Once in seven days they have a sacrifice without the animal."

The first monk to arrive (Alopen), in 635 A.D., hastened to get imperial support, and Chêng Kuan of the T'ang dynasty gave by imperial rescript a somewhat guarded support to the faith, ending: "This teaching is helpful to all creatures and beneficial to all men. So let it have free course throughout the empire." [3] In gratitude, a faithful portrait of the Emperor was placed upon the walls of the monastery: "The celestial beauty appeared in its variegated colours."

[3] This edict has been identified among the dynastic records.

In every respect it is clear that monasteries were built in purely Chinese style, and they must outwardly have resembled the Buddhist ones. "The corridors and walls were nobly ornamented and beautifully decorated; roofs and flying eaves with coloured tiles appeared like the five-coloured pheasant on the wing." From the imperial rescript it is clear that the first missionaries brought images, for the days of iconoclasm in the Byzantine Empire had not yet come.

The Nestorians possessed a great advantage over modern missionaries in being able to say what they liked about Christendom; it was not represented by samples at treaty ports. In describing the condition of Syria it must be admitted they had in mind far more the need for impressing the Chinese than of setting forth strict truth.

"The country produces asbestos cloth, the soul-restoring incense, the bright-moon pearls, and night-shining gems.

"Robberies and thefts are unknown among the common people, while everyone enjoys happiness and peace. None but the luminous teachings prevail; none but virtuous rulers are raised to the sovereign power. The territory is of vast extent; and its refined laws and institutions as well as accomplished manners and customs are gloriously brilliant."

In point of fact, Syria had for a century and a half been under Moslem rule and some of the other statements might be hard to verify. At the end is given the name of a patriarch (of Seleucia-Ctesiphon), who had really been dead several months.

It seems probable that the persecution of all foreign creeds which broke out in 845 was fatal to Nestorianism in China, but it was reintroduced from the conversion of two tribes of Turkish origin, the Keraits and the Onguts, who were later connected with the Mongols.[4]

[4] There exists a letter of 1007 from the Bishop of Merv to the Patriarch, reporting the conversion of the Keraits and asking for concessions about their fasting.

Thus on the establishment of the Mongol dynasty, Nestorian Christianity got a new foothold in the empire. At Fang Shan, a few miles southwest of Peking, there is a Buddhist "Temple of the character Ten" (in Chinese +) which contains some old Christian monuments and was undoubtedly Nestorian originally. Other remains have been found.

These first Christian missionaries represented no alien culture, but could speak to the Chinese in terms that they perfectly understood. They appear to have done more than our modern missionaries have so far been able to accomplish in the way of direct conversion—not otherwise. On the other hand, it does not appear that Nestorian Christianity really exerted any traceable influence on the stream of Chinese civilization.[5]

It was likewise by monastic preaching that virtually all Northern Europe was converted to the faith. It certainly does not seem that the monks deliberately planned by their wide-spreading missions to bring about the much needed stabilization of Europe after the fall of Rome, they rather went forward step by step as they saw the will of God, not specially concerned as to the ultimate result of their labours; yet this was by far the most important eventual outcome of all the work they did.

To the rude and warlike Northern children—for as such they are depicted in the entrancing Icelandic *sagas,* the whole race of them more like college freshmen than men of mature years—Christianity meant far more immediately a sharing of the culture of the South than any very conspicuous improvement in their morals. This is very evident in the history of the Franks by Gregory of Tours.

[5] I am much indebted both to the lectures and personal conversation of Prof. Paul Pelliot, of the Collège de France, who has made some most interesting discoveries about the Nestorians, collecting materials for a much fuller account than any that has yet been written. His volumes will be welcomed by scholars.

The legions of Rome had failed at length to guard the imperial frontiers or to set any bounds to the ravages of barbarians swarming over land and sea. The Christian monk succeeded not only in keeping the Northern races in the Northern lands, but by adding those territories to Christendom, he both relieved the southlands of that special danger and gave Western Europe a real unity that endured for almost an entire millennium.

The South gave a common Latin tongue and a common cultural tradition that reached into the Arctic Circle; the North contributed a common architecture whose glory has never been surpassed and whose magnificent Gothic minsters, enriched by endless variety, and yet in most features essentially the same, still rise from the Norwegian fjords to the Sicilian hills, and from the furthest limits of Portugal to countries far east of the Vistula.

In employing monks as their missionaries, and founding monasteries as their mission stations, besides addressing themselves in the first place to kings, both the Celtic and the Latin Churches agreed; in other things for the most part they differed. An Irish monastery in a pagan land, as in Ireland itself, was set down far from the abodes of man, in surroundings that suggested, in some degree at least, the deserts where monasticism itself was born. Such were the places beloved by SS. Columba and Aidan, and Cuthbert. Iona and Lindisfarne, lonely, rocky, wave-beaten islands, Melrose beside a river well inland, all distant from cities and marts, are typical Irish missions. It is a beautiful story of simple devotion, deep sympathy for beasts and love of nature's own solitudes that Adaman has to tell in his famous "Life of Columba." [6] and in later years

[6] That the Irish monks were more appreciative of nature than the Latin will hardly be denied; yet it is noteworthy that no Celtic record even mentions the now famous Fingal's cave in Staffa, close though it is to Iona.

Gall [7] and Columbanus among the mountains of Switzerland represented the untiring devotion of the Celts. They did not seek big towns.

The Latins represented a different tradition and a greater one, maybe. Theirs was the accumulated wisdom and the imperial tradition of Rome. Bede tells us how in sending S. Augustine to Ethelbert of Kent, Pope Gregory sought to impress the Saxons by such an embassy as one sovereign might send to another.

The Latin monks, whatever their race, and many were of barbarian stock, set up their seats in the largest towns there were—S. Augustine in Canterbury, striving also to occupy Rochester, London, and York; S. Boniface at Mainz upon the busy Rhine; S. Willibrod at Frisian Utrecht; S. Ansgar, the apostle of the North, at Charles' stronghold of Hamburg; Boro among the Wends; and Adelbert at Prague, all sought the biggest cities or the best strategic points.

It is of extraordinary interest to find that (unlike the Nestorians in China), S. Boniface in his very uphill work of bringing Christianity to the German lands has to complain in a letter to the Pope that his German, Bavarian, and Frankish converts were scandalized by travellers' reports of what went on under the very shadow of S. Peter's at Rome. Pope Zachary (under date of April 1, 743), could only reply that he was outraged too, but that all his efforts to bring about an improvement had so far failed.[8]

[7] The Abbey of S. Gall afterwards became famed throughout Europe for its singing and also for its copying of MSS. (See p. 225.)

[8] See the correspondence quoted in Maitland's *Dark Ages*, No. IX, pp. 154-5. Unfortunately the barbarians did not draw the inference of Boccaccio's Jewish convert, that a faith that could continue to exist with such appalling scandals at its very heart must indeed be divine. His tale is plagiarised in Luther's *Table Talk* (Sec. DCCCLXIX, W. Hazlitt's ed., p. 353) where the incident is said to have happened at Wittenberg and in the reformer's own experience.

As with missionaries in many other lands and centuries, the monks were building for posterity very well, but for their own generation the results were by no means what might have been hoped for. The newly Christianized people were apt to throw off their old barbarian codes of morality and honour without being very seriously influenced by the ethics of their new faith.

A terrible example among the Franks is the well-known story of the revolt of the nuns at Poitiers shortly after the death of S. Radegund (587). With the help of "murderers, adulterers, law-breakers, and other scoundrels" the furious women broke all bounds, committed disgraceful excesses and routed completely the bishops and clergy who desired to restore order. Fighting went on in the very church and the trouble lasted for two years.[9] In the days of early mission work, Christianity would seem to have done very much more for architecture and political organization than for actual morals.

As the generations wore on, improvement was steady and perhaps even rapid. The Christianization of Europe was never quite completed; the Lapps are mostly pagan yet. But of all northern Christendom—practically every church beyond the empire's ancient bounds—the monk could feel that it was his own work. Without the devoted labours of the ascetics, the barbarians must have remained for further centuries outside the pale. The position of the monk at the dawn of the Middle Ages is very well expressed by Henry Osborn Taylor: "Many bishops and priests were little better than the nobles, yet the Church preserved Christian belief and did something to preserve morality.

"Everywhere the monk was the most striking object lesson, with his austerities, his terror-stricken sense of sinfulness and conviction of the peril of the world. No material, grasping bishop, no dissolute and treacherous priest denied that

[9] Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, bk. IX, chh. 39-44.

the monk's was the ideal Christian life; and the laity stood in awe, or expectation, of the wonder-working power of his asceticism." [10]

Missionary zeal, in fact, seems to be inherent in the very essence of monasticism, for from their very foundation in the thirteenth century, the friars found their way out to China; the Jesuits in the sixteenth to Japan. Both supplied many pioneers for the exploration and settlement of the Americas.

S. Francis himself, travelling to the East with the Crusaders, preached to an Egyptian army with the sultan at its head, though he knew no syllable of the Arabic tongue. Success in such conditions was hardly to be hoped for, though it speaks something for the chivalry of that day that such a thing was permitted at all.

The scene must have been picturesque, but we know little more than the fact. Probably the great difference in the whole cultural background between the two civilizations prevented the personality of S. Francis from being specially impressive to the Moslems. In the "Speculum Perfectionis" [11] we read how he taught the brethren to travel with humility and devotion to the furthest portions of the world. God has chosen them to look after the souls both of the faithful and the heathen.

From the first, the Franciscans were a missionary order. It would undoubtedly have delighted the soul of S. Francis could he have seen his children carrying the Gospel to the furthest recesses of the American wildernesses. It was they who, when in the late eighteenth century the Russians penetrating southward from Alaska caused somewhat needless alarm to the Spanish rulers of Mexico, under Junipero Serra carried *El Camino Real* through the California hills, along the shore. Beside it, at convenient intervals, they strung

[10] *Mediæval Mind*, vol. i, p. 195.
[11] IV, 65, pp. 118-122, Sabatier's edition.

those picturesque old missions that impart to that delightful country something of the atmosphere of Southern Europe.

One of them, close by the Golden Gate, has given the name of San Francisco himself to the metropolis of the West; while its rival, Los Angeles, takes its name from another mission. Others have given names to pleasant, palm-shaded sea-side towns. White men now worship where once the Indians prayed.

The Mongol conquests, extending into Europe and including China under the great Emperor Kublai Khan (well known from Coleridge's poem), opened a secure way to the Far East along which travelled some of the early Franciscans, such as John of Montecorvino, made Archbishop of Peking,[12] Friar Odoric of Venice, and many more.

Those were the days when Marco Polo gave Europe its first real knowledge of China and, though they are far less known, some of the friars, particularly Odoric, supply information of little less importance. Odoric refers to the Nestorians as "Christians indeed, but schismatics and heretics." [13] Marco Polo is less unsympathetic in his references.

Some two centuries later, the Portuguese conquests in the East, following in the wake of Vasco da Gama, who doubled the Cape in 1498 and found a new route to India, opened new communications with all the far Oriental lands. S. Francis Xavier (1506-1552), one of the original members of the Society of Jesus (p. 251) had a most remarkable career as a missionary, travelling about in the true spirit of his Basque race, over all the wide areas between Goa and Japan.

He inaugurated Jesuit methods of propaganda, wholesale Baptism, and very tolerant recognition of ancient customs

[12] Where he arrived about 1295. He became Archbishop in 1307, and is said to have had seven suffragans. His most notable convert was Prince George, mentioned by Marco Polo, formerly Nestorian. Kublai's mother was a Kerait princess, a Nestorian Christian.

[13] *Travels* of Friar Odoric, sec. 6.

not entirely inconsistent with Christianity, in the hope of providing for the future of the Church by bringing up children in the faith.

To him belongs the credit of having realized before anyone else, at least to some extent, those peculiar qualities of the Japanese which have given them in their intercourse with Europeans so very different a fate from that of all other Asiatics. His letters from their country contain many references to the keen anxiety of the people to learn, in contrast to the comparative listlessness of other Oriental folk.

The missionaries were eventually expelled from the empire by the founder of the Tokugawa line of Shoguns. The Japanese view is given by Count Okuma: "Although the object of the pioneer of the mission, Xavier, was to preach the Gospel, that of those who followed him was by no means to spread the doctrine of Christianity, but to absorb our country by a series of most treacherous intrigues." "If the Portuguese ministers had confined their energy to religious enterprises only, Japan would easily have been transformed into a Christian country."

But that the Jesuits planted the seeds of Christianity very deep is evident from the fact that when in the nineteenth century Japan was opened up to intercourse with the world by the expedition of Commodore Perry (1852-4), it was found that many families had in secret preserved their faith all through the long seclusion of the land—two hundred and fifty years.

This is one of many romances connected with the story of the early Jesuit missionaries, both in East and West. One Constantino Beschi contrived to get high in the favour of a native Indian prince, and he used to travel about his dominions in all the pomp and circumstance of a high Asiatic grandee, while many of his colleagues, no worse men than himself, in their own opinion or his, were ministering to wretched outcasts who got ruthlessly driven from the path

by his numerous attendants whenever the great man was pleased to pass along that way.

In China, Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) inaugurated a strikingly successful policy of using Western knowledge of astronomy, architecture, artillery, and clocks so to impress the emperors as to make the missionaries virtually indispensable.[14]

Nor did the Jesuits show any narrow spirit of mere partisanship when the empire was convulsed by strife. Amid the wars of the early seventeenth century by which the Manchu Tatars eventually overthrew the native Mings, the Jesuits gave help to both, and yet contrived to be in the confidence of the Manchus. Schall, Verbiest, and others held high office under the vigorous and most capable Kanghi.

The Jesuits delighted the unsophisticated Manchu rulers by their scientific knowledge, by building a palace in the style of the Renaissance, and by making those ornate astronomical instruments that the Germans appropriated during the Boxer disturbances.

Unfortunately neither their common traditions in monasticism nor even their allegiance to the See of Rome were sufficient to keep friars and clerks regular in harmony. The Jesuits got into most unhappy disputes with the more unyielding Franciscans and Dominicans, who strongly disapproved of the large concessions made to Chinese ideas in the matter of ancestor worship and other Confucian traditions. Long and somewhat acrimonious disputes—during which successive Popes tried to get at the truth, and Chinese sovereigns were called in by the Jesuits to decide problems of Christian theology—led eventually to utter disaster for the mission.

In the Western hemisphere, as in the East, Jesuit missionaries were to play a most important part. The first

[14] By this time it seems likely that both Nestorian and Franciscan missions had quite died out.

wide explorers of the American continents had been laymen —the renowned conquistadores of Spain, such as Cortes, Pizarro, Valdivia, and De Soto, or vigorous French pioneers such as La Salle.[15] But it was largely by the Jesuit missionaries, both in North and South, that more detailed knowledge was secured.

Thus, by Fr. Kuno, a Spanish Jesuit, was discovered, amid the colourful deserts of Arizona, the wonderful ruins of Casa Grande, and by him was begun the quaint old church of San Xavier del Bac (near Tucson), whose very architecture with its pagan looking detail and Indian statues illustrates the Jesuit desire to be all things to all races. By French Jesuits the upper lakes were mapped, and the Mississippi was explored, tracing out that great French empire based on Louisiana and Canada that was never to come to birth. But men of another speech still honour Joliet and Marquette.

A peculiarly interesting result of the Jesuit missions was the setting up in the heart of South America of a remarkable monk-ruled state, the fourth that Christendom founded —not counting as separate realms the successive dominions of the military orders (p. 201). In Paraguay, extending over a very much larger area than belongs to the present republic of that name, they founded a vast Indian reservation where on fertile river flats the aborigines were preserved from that debilitating contact with the Spaniards that had so immensely reduced their numbers in other parts of the continents and islands.

The Jesuits were first called in to care for that territory by a Dominican friar who had recently been made a bishop in those parts about the year 1586. The fathers did a splendid work in protecting the Indians from the rapacity of the

[15] This man got into trouble and lost his French estates on account of his connexion with the Jesuits. He had a brother among the Sulpicians, but he does not appear to have joined any order, though this is not impossible.

Spaniards, but the state they organized was a paternal absolutism, controlled by the distant General in Rome and owning but a nominal allegiance to the Spanish king. It was probably the best that circumstances allowed, but there was much trouble both with bishops and governors of Asuncion.

The order must have derived large profits from the plantation, but the Indians were undoubtedly better off than their brethren exploited by the Spanish settlers. A treaty between Portugal and Spain, in 1750, which divided Paraguay, was the beginning of the end of the state. The Indians had not been consulted, the Jesuits objected to the partition, and there was fighting for some months.

In the very interesting old walled city of Carthagena, upon the Spanish Main, there stands a double-towered Classic cathedral of a common Spanish type. It contains the relics of a Jesuit saint, Peter Claver (1581-1654), who through many years worked among the slaves that in huge numbers were shipped to the place, caring nothing for the unpopularity that it brought him from the wealth and fashion of the town.

He went out to the ships bringing negroes from Africa in the pilot boats and is said to have baptized no less than three hundred thousand of those whose slave for ever he declared himself to be.

Thus, it was mainly by members of religious orders that the bounds of Christendom were extended in both ancient and recent times. Indeed, from the Council of Chalcedon to well into the eighteenth century, they had something approaching a monopoly in the noble work. Nestorian, Benedictine, Franciscan, Jesuit, each in turn, each in his own way.

It is monks who inaugurate the story of the English as told in the deathless pages of Venerable Bede. And a thousand years later, members of orders then unformed gave

to America memories of a not dissimilar kind. A railroad and many cities, besides countless little whitewashed churches, still keep alive their honoured memories from the coral reefs of Florida to the poppy-strewn hills of California and northward to where the eternal forests of Michigan dip into the waters of the lakes.

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Among the most interesting sources for the conversion of Northern Europe are the Icelandic *sagas,* particularly the *Story of Olaf* in the *Heimskringla* by Snorri Sturleson.

A general account will be found in Hope, *Conversion of the Teutonic Races.*

For later missions, *Jesuit Relations,* ed. by Prof. Thwaites, 73 vols. More briefly Parkman, *Jesuits in North America,* and *Pioneers of France.*

See also works under Chapter xvii.

Bancroft's *History of the United States* deals with the subject in part.

CHAPTER XII

THE MONK AS STATESMAN

The monastically moulded culture of the Middle Ages was perhaps one of the most democratic that the world ever knew in the sense that an extremely large proportion of the population felt that they had in it some genuine share.

The wonderfully high civilization of ancient Greece was always upon a foundation of slavery, and this was the case even more with the empire of Rome. The culture that was inaugurated by the Renaissance was shared by a relatively small portion of the general community, especially during the eighteenth century, when, perhaps, from the purely intellectual point of view, it reached its most splendid climax.

But during the Middle Ages architecture was a communal art and the names of individual designers are usually all unknown. It required the coöperation of all classes to raise from mediæval poverty cathedrals and churches that for beauty and size have but seldom been approached with all the wealth and material resources of modern times. There is a democratic atmosphere of camaraderie among all classes —from the plough-man up to the knight among the pilgrims who journeyed with Chaucer to Canterbury—that in Europe could hardly be paralleled today.

It certainly is not true that in the Middle Ages social conditions were satisfactory, nor that the poor were not exploited and oppressed on the manor, nor that the average person was morally better or materially happier than at the present time, but the difference in the actual standards of

living was less than today[1] and in the carrying out of public works and particularly the building of churches there were elements of a real democracy.

In no respect is the contribution of the religious orders to modern life more striking than in what they did for the development of democratic administration, and yet evidence is almost wholly circumstantial. It is not a point upon which mediæval writers display any interest whatever.

S. Basil had feared, and definitely provided against, a democratic state of affairs in his convents (p. 44). In the East it is certainly true that whatever popular control of the policy of monasticism the monks may have won has been of very little significance to the outside world. Nor has it been at all considerable in itself.

That the Greeks were the inventors of democracy is evidenced by the very word itself, but after the days of Alexander its flame had burned somewhat murkily, and there is not much evidence that popular control was ever a very vital tradition of the Eastern Church. It is remarkable that Procopius, writing about 550 A.D., speaks of the Sklabenoi or Slavs as "not ruled by one man but dwelling from of old in a state of democracy."[2] But the race has never since, at least not until the nineteenth century, shown any very democratic tendencies either in secular or ecclesiastical affairs.

The first commonwealth ever to be controlled by Christian monks was that of Mount Athos and it has outlasted the, historically, far more significant instances that were to rise in Western Europe (p. 53). It never had any lay subjects and in fact all women and even female animals are excluded from the holy mountain. The rocky peninsula forms a monastic republic, in whose assembly each of the

[1] Adam Smith in the *Wealth of Nations* has some interesting observations on this point and much that he says will stand the test of modern research.

[2] *De Bello Gotthico*, III, 14.

twenty convents is represented, but the state is not of great interest in general history (p. 201).

In Western Europe it will hardly be questioned that the parliaments of nations owe something to the chapters of the monks. How much it is most difficult to say.

The rule of S. Benedict provides that the abbot must do nothing of moment without calling together the chapter of his monks; "as often as anything special is to be done in the monastery, the abbot shall call together the whole congregation, and shall himself explain the question at issue." But the abbot, having pondered the advice given, and remembering that it is often to a younger person that God reveals what is best, must himself decide.

This leaves the abbot in complete control of the situation, indeed, but it makes him much less of an autocrat than an early feudal king, who was not absolutely obliged to consult his council on all occasions, however politic he may have found it to do so. It is inconceivable that under such a rule the abbot should have been usually an autocrat.

In course of time the monasteries became great land-owners and this in Europe has for centuries involved large responsibilities for local government. In Britain the tradition even yet is strong, though of course a waning force. Inevitably the abbots found themselves compelled to take their part in the feudal system. They were impelled to take their share in county activities as local magnates, just like other land-owners. They had their own manorial courts; they sat in the shiremoot.

Their education was apt to be better, often much better, than that of the lay barons; their usefulness was extended accordingly. The king called them to the great council of the realm; in England eventually twenty-nine of them had seats in the House of Lords. So they had to acquire London residences, and, with less reason, they frequently had others in provincial centres. At

Exeter, for example, in the Close may still be seen the city houses of three great country abbots. The town house of the abbots of Cluny is the seat of a well known museum in Paris. At the abbeys themselves S. Benedict's provision in the Rule that the abbot should have his meals in the guesten hall, and if guests failed might thither summon such of the cloister monks as he pleased, was extended into giving the abbot a house of his own, frequently with separate hall and chapel, so that sometimes the monks themselves may have known little more of their Father-in-God than when they saw him pontificating with all the state of a diocesan bishop in the abbey church (p. 130). He had a fixed income from the abbey funds with a completely separate establishment in the case of a great house.

Everything, in short, was early tending to make the abbots practical men of affairs, feudal lords, statesmen, ambassadors for kings or Popes, rather than simple recluses. The Confessor at Westminster founded (or rather refounded) the famous abbey close to his own palace—S. Stephen's, now the Houses of Parliament. Scottish kings at Holyrood and Dunfermline had palaces forming part of the same block of buildings as abbeys. In Spain at the Escurial and for a short time at Yuste [3] there were similar arrangements.

This may have led to monks being informally consulted upon matters of State, though it is not suggested in the old Scottish couplet telling how the king used to go to Holyrood:

> Unto the saintly convent with good monks to dine,
> And quaff to organ music the pleasant cloister wine.

The lord abbot became a great grandee in the world that his spiritual ancestors had given up as wholly vile. It would not have seemed right to the desert solitaries, but the evolution was quite inevitable. The monk was not seek-

[3] Whither the emperor, Charles V, retired in his later years. See p. 135, note, about Dunfermline.

ing political power; it was being forced into his hands. A most typical abbot, elected not for family connexions nor any sort of "pull" but purely from his popularity with the monks, a man of humble birth, is described for us in the well known "Chronicle" of Jocelin de Brakelond, the original for Carlyle's "Past and Present."

"An eloquent man was he, both in French and Latin, but intent more on the substance and method of what he said than on the style of words. He could read English books most admirably, and was wont to preach to the people in English, but in the dialect of Norfolk, where he was born and bred; and so he caused a pulpit to be set up in the church for the ease of the hearers, and for the ornament of the church.

"The abbot seemed also to prefer an active life to one of contemplation, and rather commended good officials than good monks. He very seldom approved of any one on account of his literary acquirements unless he also possessed sufficient knowledge of secular matters; and whenever he chanced to hear that any prelate had resigned his pastoral care and become an anchorite, he did not praise him for it."

Abbot Samson, in fact, seems to have lost the true—or at least the original—spirit of monasticism entirely. He cannot even appreciate it in others. Nothing perhaps could better illustrate the fact that a thirteenth century abbot had almost ceased to be a real monk, and had become instead a practical man of the world, quite as well equipped to bear his part in Parliament as any of the lay barons.

As one studies some of the monks from the original sources it is impossible to avoid the feeling that if they were to come back to life today many of the old abbots and priors would instinctively turn their steps toward Wall Street or the Capitol, quite as readily as to the churches.

The feudalization of the monasteries came at a later time than a similar process in the Church herself. Representa-

tives of the great baronial houses filled most of the sees of Christendom during early mediæval years, but the abbots were usually elected by the monks, and, as these were recruited from all classes in the community, the religious houses appear to have formed a fairly complete democracy in a society where politically it was almost or entirely unknown. The German chronicler Bernold (1083) tells us that he saw in the monasteries counts cooking and margraves feeding pigs.[4]

The qualities that gain popularity are in all ages very much the same and the general atmosphere that Jocelin describes at the Abbey of S. Edmund is strangely similar to what still exists in the great English public schools. A more democratic state of affairs as between the members of the community themselves it would not be easy to find. Money confers almost no prestige at all. The son of a British nobleman may at Eton have to fag for the son of a country rector.[5]

This democratic tradition of the monks is strongly confirmed by the bitter invective upon them which in the eleventh century was addressed to King Robert by Adalbero (p. 130) who, from his hill-top bishopric of Laon, looked with the utmost disgust on the changes that the regulars were making. The only very definite part of his complaint is that men of the lowest birth, ignorant, lazy, deformed, peasants, sailors or shepherds were being raised to the highest places in the Church.[6]

How far was this democratic tradition in monasticism a

[4] *Monumenta Germanicæ historica;* (Hanover), V, 439.

[5] This is illustrated by the well-known story of how when a boy from S. Europe was sent to Harrow it was hoped to give his schoolfellows high respect for him by letting it be known that in certain circumstances he might occupy a prominent throne. The only result was that almost all the Harrovians took the necessary steps that would enable them to boast in the event of the conditions being fulfilled that they had kicked a king of Spain.

[6] Migne, *P.L.* 141, *Adalberonis Carmen,* col. 773.

power in the world at large? It may not be entirely without significance that Magna Carta was drawn up in the Abbey of S. Edmund.

Parliament met originally in the palace of the king at Westminster, the theory being that the sovereign summoned leading men from all portions of the country to consult about government and to vote supplies. Among those entitled to be called were mitred abbots, eventually twenty-nine, besides the bishops and the barons. One of the abbots was the head of the great house across the street and, presumably at his invitation, Parliament soon formed the custom of meeting in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey, which continued so to be used after the dissolution, and to this day the building is the property of the nation, not, like the rest of the shrine, of the Church.

It is also to be noted that when Parliament met at Oxford or any other provincial town it was usually in a religious house. The first regularly constituted Parliament of Scotland met on July 15, 1326, at the Abbey of Cambuskenneth by a wind of the Forth near Stirling; later ones met frequently in religious houses, particularly Franciscan friaries. We read in the reign of Henry VIII of a "Parliament Chamber near the Friars Preachers."

Though no friar ever had a seat in Parliament (as such) it is rather to the friars than to the monks that we must go for illustrations of representative government. While S. Francis was primarily a saint, S. Dominic was a practical statesman, and his order was given a remarkably democratic constitution, the main elements of which date from the Chapter held at Bologna, under S. Dominic himself in 1220-1.

The friars of each local priory elected their own prior [7]—

[7] Constitution of 1228 as printed in *Ehrle-Denifle*, Archiv. I, p. 196 seq., quoted by Ernest Barker, *The Dominican Order and Convocation;* a study of the growth of representation in the Church during the thirteenth century.

as in the old Benedictine arrangement—but S. Benedict had gone no further than this. In the Dominican order each province (usually roughly corresponding to some modern nation) had a prior elected by a chapter composed of the conventual priors and two friars elected by the whole body of each priory. The master-general was elected by a General Chapter composed of the provincial priors and two friars elected by each provincial chapter.[8]

Besides these elected officers are assemblies, largely elected. All the friars of each individual convent are entitled to seats in its chapter. The provincial chapter consists of the priors of all convents within it, the general preachers of the province and one representative of the friars from each convent. It annually elects a committee of four *definitors* from the most discreet and proper friars and this forms a sort of executive body with wide powers extending even, in case of need, to the suspension of the provincial prior.

The General Chapter of the whole order consists of all the provincial priors with their *socii* and the general preachers of the province in which the General Chapter is held. This, again, has an inner circle of *definitors*. In two successive annual chapters, one *definitor* is elected by each provincial chapter and each has a *socius* assigned to him by the provincial prior. In the third annual chapter, the elective character for the time being disappears and the provincial priors ex-officio and by themselves act as *definitors*. Twice in the history of the order (1228 and 1236), the *capitulum generalissimum* met, containing all the provincial priors and elected *definitors*—two appointed by each provincial chapter. Modelled to some extent on the organization of earlier orders, particularly the Hospitalers (p. 202), and still more the Premonstratensians, but far more intricate and more democratic than either, the Dominican order was

[8] Only one representative friar from each of four provinces erected since 1221.

thus endowed with a very elaborate constitution which at once recalls more secular instruments of government.

A German scholar has declared that "it is by far the most perfect example that the Middle Ages have produced of the faculty of monastic corporations for constitution building." [9]

The Franciscans originally had only the simplest constitution. Instead of the master-general at the head of the whole order the Rule provides for the election of a general minister "by the mynisters provynciallis and the custodies at the chapter of Whitsuntide." [10] This body is usually to meet once in three years but this may be varied by the general minister, whom it may replace if he appear not to be sufficient and able for the office. Though thus without the representative system of the Dominicans, the Franciscans had vigorous democratic ideals and their government was later assimilated to that of the preaching order.

It was in the Dominican convent at Oxford that in 1258 the so-called Mad Parliament [11] met which forced upon the sorely reluctant king a council of fifteen, and took a somewhat significant step in limiting royal power. Evidence that the Dominican order directly influenced the constitution of the British Parliament is purely circumstantial, and it certainly cannot be proved, but at the same time it is undoubtedly probable.

The elder Simon de Montfort was associated with S. Dominic in the terribly devastating work of putting down the Albigenses, and in 1212 at Pamiers he summoned to a Parliament, bishops, barons, and burgesses. It was his son who led the English barons against Henry III, and summoned the first Parliament in which the towns of England were represented. It is certainly unlikely that he was entirely uninfluenced by the precedents set by the friars.

[9] Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, IV, 390; quoted by Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

[10] See *Monumenta Franciscana, Rolls Series*, II, p. 71.

[11] Matthew Paris, *Chron. Mai.* IV. 697. *R. S.*

A monk of Westminster expresses pained surprise that the Franciscans should have supported Simon de Montfort against king and Pope, not thinking, as would have been proper, of the privileges and honours which the Roman Church has showered upon them, nor how King Henry (III) has cared for and watered the little plant of their order. The monk is so scandalized that he refers to the friars simply as *"quidam,"* and he goes on with a sad lamentation over the state of his country beginning: *"O Anglia, olim gloriosa."* [12] The "Song of Lewes," written by a Franciscan, shows a very strongly democratic spirit.

All that we are entitled definitely to assert is that in monasticism we find important elements of democratic government, and in the Dominican order a well developed representative constitution, antedating anything of the kind that is at all well organized in the government of the English State; that men closely connected with the genesis of representative parliaments were associated with Dominican friars and that monastic chapter houses were very usual places in which parliaments met. The Mother of Parliaments may well have been a daughter of the chapters of the monks. The Dominican order itself may have been influenced by the ancient *cortes* of Spain, but there seems to be nothing to prove it.

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A very useful and suggestive little work is Ernest Barker's *The Dominican Order and Convocation,* urging the point that it was the Church which supplied both the idea of representation and its rules of procedure.

The Parliament of Scotland by Robert S. Rait (1924. Univ. of Glasgow) points out how at a convention in Brigham (1290) sat 23 abbots and 10 priors. Different rolls up to 1560 enumerate seven more abbots and as many priors. The principle of monastic representation was so well established that even commendators sat till the act of 1640 which excluded all clergy.

[12] *Flores Historiarum,* 1265, *Rolls Series* (Ed. Luard), III, 266.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MONK AS SOLDIER

Nowhere in history, perhaps, does the monk appear in a more incongruous rôle than as the restorer of a professional soldiery in the days of feudal levies. His desire to win back the Holy Sepulchre of Christ from the hands of infidels was of the noblest and the best, but the eventual results of his action were by no means entirely good.

It was no uncommon thing from their very earliest years for monks to take up arms in causes that to them seemed right (p. 28). In the winter of 754-5, the Abbot Warnerius helped to defend Rome against Astolph and the Lombards.[1] All through the Middle Ages it was by no means unusual, especially on borderlands, for monks to spring to arms in some patriot cause. Their failure to assist in the defence of Constantinople, in 1453, has never been counted for good.

The mediæval effort to consecrate war was in itself one of the greatest triumphs of the monastic ideal. The noviciate of the knight was borrowed from the noviciate of the monk. Assuming that a thing in its very essence so fundamentally beastly as warfare is capable of any consecration, the all night watching of the armour before the dimly lighted altar, the vow that such arms should till death be wielded to break the heathen and uphold the Christ, and the noble conceptions of all that Christian chivalry implied, are among the most beautiful ideals that the world ever knew. There is hardly a greater reproach to our own generation than the fact that,

[1] See Milman, *Latin Christianity*, II, 423.

while warfare is commoner than ever, all chivalry is well-nigh past.

When the success of the First Crusade had set up the feudal Christian kingdom of Jerusalem, many of the soldiers of the cross went home. But others stayed in the Holy Land. Realizing the great insecurity of the weak outpost of their faith, a few good knights vowed themselves to fight till death for the highest of all earthly aims, to hold the Sepulchre of Christ against the Moslem hordes. They took their name from the Temple where Christ so often was, on part of whose site their barrack-priory stood (1118).

In 1128 at the Council of Troyes they were formally recognized as an order, chiefly by the influence of the great S. Bernard (p. 140), the dominating spirit of that gathering. Accepting the Cistercian rule, they adopted the white habit of the order, adding the red cross of Crusaders.

They were exempted from all other jurisdiction than that of the Pope, relieved from paying tithes, and endowed with the singular privilege that their churches were unaffected by interdicts. Jacques de Vitry describes them as "in turn lions of war and lambs at the hearth; rough knights on the battlefield, pious monks in the chapel; formidable to the enemies of Christ, gentleness itself to His friends."

The Grand Master, residing in the mother house at Jerusalem, ranked in Christendom as a sovereign prince, but the order was not destined to hold any political state. Each large district covered by the Templars' organization was under the control of a grand prior, and over each local chapter of knight-monks was set a preceptor.

Had the weak and unstable little kingdom of Jerusalem been entrusted to the order, its life would probably have been longer than it was. Divided counsels had much to do with the fall of Jerusalem itself in 1187, and then the Templars moved their headquarters to Antioch, later to Acre. Unsupported by Europe and unable to hold their

position in Asia, the Templars made peace with the Moslems and retreated to the West.

The failure of the Crusades brought great unpopularity upon them. Some of their number laid themselves open to severe criticism by fighting with the English against the Scots in the battle of Falkirk, in 1298, where certainly their vows did not call on them to be.

The tragic end of the order was one of the most disgraceful episodes of mediæval times. It had gathered enormous riches and held a most dominating position in Europe, when Philip the Fair, aided by the weak French Pope, Clement V (a former bishop of Bordeaux), trumping up charges that never were proved, had all the Templars in France arrested (1307), and after proceedings that reflect no credit on anyone concerned, the noble order was dissolved in 1312.

Chapter meetings were secret, and at these novices were admitted. There is little doubt that less enquiry than in the earlier days had sometimes been made into the records of recruits. Possibly the great and cultured order had learned to appreciate the civilization of its Saracen foes. But there is no real doubt that the chief complaint against the order was its wealth. What little of this escaped royal rapacity was handed over to the Knights of S. John, except in Portugal and Spain where crusades were needed at the very gates against the Moors.

In Portugal the name was changed (in 1319) to "The Order of Christ." In the fifteenth century the Grand Master was the celebrated Prince Henry the Navigator, who, from his sea-girt retreat at Sagres near Cape S. Vincent, organized with the funds of the order those maritime explorations which eventually, after his own death, led to Vasco da Gama's doubling of the Cape.

Among the earliest results of these voyages was the discovery of Porto Santo and Madeira. On the former island

for a time was the home of Moniz Perestrello.[2] His daughter was the wife of Christopher Columbus, and it has never been doubted that from his father-in-law he got many ideas about exploration. His great voyage was unquestionably facilitated by those undertaken by the Order of Christ. Thus even in the discovery of America monasticism may claim some share.

The Knights Hospitalers, as their name implies, were originally an ambulance unit. They count their founder one Gerald (d. 1118), but in some form or another they existed before his time.[3] Under Raymond of Provence (Grand Master 1120-60), they established a hospital near the Church of the Sepulchre, following S. Augustine's rule (p. 62). Gradually they adopted a military organization and thus became colleagues, but rivals, of the Templars.

So great did their prestige become that in 1131, Alphonsus, king of Navarre and Aragon, actually left his crown to the military orders, believing that they could hold his dominions against the Moors better than any secular prince. But the will was set aside. The order, however, took part in the Moorish wars in Spain as well as in the Holy Land Crusades.

Meanwhile preceptories and commanderies had been founded all over Europe. The capture of Jerusalem by Saladin, in 1187, was, of course, a very severe blow, but yet the most glorious period of the order's history even in the East was still to come. It had become a political power, although on a small scale, when Richard Coeur de Lion handed over to it Acre, which was held until 1291.

So for the second time in history we find a monastic power governing as a sovereign state. And, unlike the monk-republic of Mount Athos (p. 53), the Hospitalers were called

[2] Its doors are preserved in the Chicago Historical Society's Rooms, in North Dearborn Avenue and Ontario Street.

[3] Murray, *New Oxford Dictionary, Hospitaler*, says they were founded about 1048.

upon to rule in their successive territories a considerable population of laity.

On the loss of Acre, a refuge was found in Cyprus by invitation of its king. A chapter of the whole order was held at Limisso, on the shore of that island, to consult as to the best way to restore its stricken fortunes, and to adapt itself to new conditions. Among other new ventures a fleet was equipped, and with such success that, in 1309, Rhodes was captured, under Grand Master Villaret. The island was held for more than two centuries.

So monks governed a kingdom on a tolerably extensive scale, nominally indeed under the suzerainty of the Emperor of the East, but practically in absolute sovereignty. New resources came in when greatly required, on account of the suppression of the Templars.

The General Chapter was sovereign in legislation and discipline, the grand master being the executive, so that the constitution was democratic so far as the actual knights were concerned. There were seven *langes* (Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon, Germany, England) constituted in that form, after the healing of a schism occasioned by an anti-grand master who had risen against Villaret whom he accused of intolerable luxury. The local commanderies were under preceptors and held chapters every Sunday.

They were grouped into priories with an annual chapter on the Feast of S. John. The priories numbered twenty-four, divided among the *langes*. Only the General Chapter had any legislative authority.[4] This was a large international body, the order having the very strange status of a sovereign state in its own territory, a monastic order in every country of Western Christendom, under a single control.

At Rhodes, the knights were in a very favourable position to dominate the Christian communications with the East

[4] Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire Général des Hospitaliers de Jérusalem*, 1100-1310, Paris.

and to check the piracy of the Moslems. Unfortunately they afterwards took to piracy themselves and harassed the shipping of the Turks. This drew upon them the crushing wrath of the Ottoman Empire, but the knights repelled several attacks, one of them led by a member of the imperial house of the Paleologi, a renegade to Islam, commanding the forces of Mahomet II.

Eventually, in 1522, the island was reduced by Suleiman II. During the very siege, the knights had been compelled to execute their chancellor, who tried to turn traitor because he had not been elected grand master, but their bravery so gained the admiration of the sultan that he provided ships to send them with honour to the West.

By Charles V they were granted, in 1530, the island of Malta, a convenient base from which they renewed their maritime war on the Turks, and a monastic power controlled the central Mediterranean. In 1565, Suleiman, not unnaturally regretting his former generosity, dispatched a most formidable expedition under Mustapha to attempt to reduce Malta. The siege that followed was one of the most memorable in all history. Under the heroic la Valette every attack was repulsed till an army of relief arrived from Spain.

Thus, it was Christian monks that administered to the Turkish power at its highest flood, the first serious reverse that it sustained. The crushing defeat at Lepanto followed in 1571. The restoration of the command of the Mediterranean to the Christian powers, partial as it might be, was owed very largely to the military monks.

The later history of the order is far less glorious. A constant series of petty fights with the Barbary Corsairs seems to have done much to reduce the knights to the moral level of the pirates. The grand master's authority was greatly diminished by the tendency of individual knights in possession of the different commanderies to defy his power, and it was still further diminished by the Reformation. In 1798, Na-

poleon was able to seize Malta itself, before long to pass into British hands.

The order still exists, though, being partly Protestant, unity is lost; the office of grand master is in commission. For a time the venerable Hospital of S. Cross, near Winchester, was under the care of the knights, and the habit and cross worn by the present brethren of the institution still preserve the memory of the connexion. The English *lange* was revived in the early nineteenth century. Besides its well known ambulance work, it maintains a hospital at Ashford. A single convent remains to the old order in S. Maria del Priorato, on the Aventine Hill at Rome.

Though far less known to fame, the German orders were destined to play a larger part in the history of the world than either the Templars or the Hospitalers. In Jerusalem, under the Christian kingdom, was a hospital, S. Mary of the Germans, a refuge for pilgrims of Teutonic race.

At the end of the twelfth century, as a result of the siege of Acre, a military and ambulance order was organized whose regular knights, according to the custom of the Germans, must be of noble birth. The grand master was limited in his power by the necessity of consulting his chapter. Emperors and Popes heaped favours on the order of Teutonic Knights, who gave what help they could to Frederick II on his crusade, ignoring his excommunication by the Pope.

On the collapse of the crusading movement, a new sphere was opened to the knights on the far northeast frontier of the German lands, against the pagan hordes of Prussia, beside the Baltic Sea. Thither the knights dispatched a great part of their forces on the invitation of the Polish king, but the grand master lived at Venice after Acre fell. On the Baltic, the order was soon enjoying great prosperity. One of its grand masters was Conrad, Landgrave of Thuringia, brother-in-law of S. Elizabeth of Hungary, whose hospital at Marburg was made over to the knights.

We get a very interesting opinion of their methods from Roger Bacon, whose views were extremely pacifist: "Hence the Saracens and pagans in many parts of the world are becoming quite impossible to convert; and especially beyond the sea, and in Prussia and the lands bordering on Germany, because the brethren of the German House (*i.e.* the Teutonic Knights) ruin all hopes of converting them, owing to the wars which they are always stirring up, and because of their lust of domination.

"There is no doubt that all the heathen nations beyond Germany would long ago have been converted but for the brutality of the brethren of the German House, because the pagan race has again and again been ready to receive the faith in peace through preaching. But they of the German House will not allow it, because they want to subjugate them and reduce them to slavery, and by subtle persuasions they have for many years deceived the Roman church." [5]

In 1309, the Grand Master transferred his seat to the strong castle of Marienburg, which became the capital of the order. Two other German military orders had joined, that of Christ and the Brethren of the Sword, both founded in earlier days to fight pagans along the Baltic shores. Thus Christian monks ruled a great European state, the first time that such sovereignty had been on any considerable scale. Their regular forces formed one of the strongest armies of Europe—far superior to feudal levies—and they conquered and Germanized far and wide. When, however, their real mission ended by the conversion of the Lithuanians, they tended more and more to secularization. In 1388 and again in 1409, they entered into commercial arrangements with England. Their power was severely restricted when Jagellon, the Duke of Lithuania, having embraced the Christian

[5] Roger Bacon, *Opus Maius*, Pars III, cap. xiii. (Bridges, III, 120, 2.) Quoted A. G. Little, *Studies in English Franciscan History, Ford Lectures*, at Oxford in 1916, p. 211-2.

faith, married the Polish queen, and so united those states. At the great battle of Tannenberg,[6] in 1410, he inflicted upon the knights so crushing a defeat that (eventually, after further hostilities) they had to cede to Poland half their territory, abandon their capital, and recognize the overlordship of Casimir, the Polish king. These arrangements were made by the treaty of Thorn in 1466.

The new capital of the knights was Königsberg, in Prussia, but so weakened was the order that it could no longer stand alone. For over a century it had formed the eastern bulwark of Germany, and on the different German states reliance had more and more to be placed. At the time of the Reformation the Grand Master was a German prince—Albert Hohenzollern Duke of Brandenburg; and in 1525, embracing Lutheranism, he secularized the order, and joining its territories to his hereditary dominions and preserving his capital at Berlin, he started the career of Prussia as a European state.

In 1701, his descendant secured the royal title. Thus the kingdom which eventually superseded Austria in the hegemony of Germany was of direct monastic origin; its military tradition was derived from the old Teutonic Knights.

Some of the members of the order in Germany had refused to recognize the acts of Grand Master Hohenzollern, and, in a gallant effort to maintain the old traditions, they elected as grand master, Walter of Cronenberg. Sovereignty was however lost, and the sadly reduced order became eventually purely Austrian, confined to religious work, but still rigidly exacting from its knights the strictest requirement of noble blood.

Thus, of the three great military orders the Templars are the best known, but their legacy to Europe (outside of Portu-

[6] How completely the Germans accept the Teutonic Knights as the founders of their power in these parts is evidenced from their having given this name to a battle in the same district in which they defeated the Russians during the recent war.

gal) is little more than a fine tradition and some beautiful churches in imitation of the Sepulchre (p. 234).

The Hospitalers of S. John of Jerusalem accomplished by far the most of the three in their common original purpose. They have left an untarnishable military record and for ever possess the distinction of having given to the flowing tide of Ottoman power its first serious check. The Teutonic Knights, after extending the bounds of Christendom and building up a great monk-state, have been the main original creators of one of the chief European powers. Theirs is undoubtedly the strangest record in the long annals of Christian monasticism.

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CHAPTER XIV

MONASTIC LITERATURE

Very many and most excellent things have been done for learning by members of religious orders, but they are far too miscellaneous and lacking in unity of any kind to form a connected chapter in the literature of mankind. In subject, they vary from the most abstruse questions of theology and philosophy to the head waters of the Great Lakes; in time, from the days when the Empire of Rome still stood, right up to the present hour.

There never have been wanting in any age of the Church's history those who have felt that too much care for secular learning might easily divert the attention of the monk from higher things. Roman though he was, S. Gregory the Great (p. 86) felt very strongly that the devout Christian should not concern himself with unprofitable pagan studies. In a man of such overpowering vitality and vigour, one is inclined to think it must have been not mere slackness but some such religious scruple that prevented him from acquiring the Greek tongue, even though resident for some years in Constantinople as the *Apocrisiarius* of the Pope.

Herbert de Losinga, the first Bishop of Norwich (late eleventh century) once dreamed of a lady of awful majesty who said to him: "I was aware that from thy youth even to the hoar hairs of old age, which are now upon thee, thou hast taken upon thee the warfare of priestly functions; how then does it come that thou art still busy with the fictions of Ovid and the fabrications of Virgil? Unseemly it is that

Christ should be preached and Ovid recited by the same mouth." [1]

A letter to "his beloved son, master Peter" from Peter the Venerable (p. 118) begins: "Labouring as you are, most beloved son, in the study of profane literature and burdened with the heavy load of purely human learning, I grieve to think you are so wasting your time, and I can see no reward for your work nor any relief from your load." [2]

Even more emphatic on the same lines is the present Superior-General of the French Benedictines: "The day that we sacrifice on the altar of study our conventual life, the solemn performance of the office, monastic regularity and stability, we lose our whole character, and almost our title to exist. Let us remember in what miserable fashion the Congregation of S. Maur ended. As soon as there is any human consideration, whether reputation, riches, or knowledge, which we put into the scale against God and which we use as a pretext for robbing Him, then our fall is near." [3]

Monastic literature of all ages is full of such sentiments; indeed it would be difficult to find any really whole-hearted endorsement of any other view from a responsible and representative monk. At Cluny, monks intimated to the librarian their opinion of the books they required by imitating the motions of a dog scratching his ear if they desired to consult a work of Classical antiquity.[4]

Yet by the simple process of not preserving them in their own libraries, the monks might have almost wiped out the writings both of Greece and Rome. It can hardly be stated too emphatically that the monk is the chief—and possibly in many lines the sole—intellectual link that binds ancient

[1] Dean Goulburn and Henry Symonds, *The Life, Letters and Sermons of Bishop Herbert de Losinga*, Parker, 1878.

[2] Migne, *P.L.* 189, col. 77. Peter the Venerable, *Lib.* I, *Epis.* ix.

[3] Abbot Paul Delatte, of Solesmes, *Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict*, English edition, p. 310.

[4] Martène, *De Ant. Mon. Rit.*, vol. iv, l.v.c.xviii, from *Consue. Cluniac;* quoted by R. S. Storrs, *Bernard of Clairvaux*, p. 243.

with modern times. The first person in Western Europe who had any idea of the immense services that the cloister might render to learning was Cassiodorus, the minister of Theodoric the Goth, who, on the reconquest of Italy by Belisarius about 540, retired to his estates in Bruttii, and there founded monasteries with the express object of fostering learning, both sacred and profane.

Such work for monks was not entirely new. Even among the desert solitaries we read of a hermit, the blessed Evagrius, who got his living by writing books, but such learning was clearly exceptional; he had been a friend of Basil and Gregory Nazianzen.[5] As Hodgkin remarks: the zeal of Cassiodorus for learning was "of infinite importance to the human race.[6] The monk with nothing but theology to occupy his mind was only too likely to become a preacher of discord and mad fanaticism, but the preservation of the works of antiquity for future ages was one of the very greatest services that monasticism rendered or could have performed."

Nor was it only the works of Classical antiquity that were preserved from destruction, wholly or in part, by the monks. It is noteworthy that the famous Icelandic *sagas,* pagan though nearly all the more interesting of them are, were preserved in Benedictine convents. One of the editors of the "Landnámabok" [7] was Styrmir hinn frodi, Prior of the monastery at Videy (d. 1245).[8]

The chronicles that form the sources of our information for the history of the early Middle Ages were kept very largely by monks, and this includes many of the most valuable such as Gildas, Bede, Einhard, William of Malmesbury, Symeon of Durham, and Matthew Paris. In this, however,

[5] Palladius, *Lausiac History,* II, xiv.
[6] *Italy and Her Invaders,* IV, 391 seq.
[7] Land-names-book, the Icelandic *Domesday.*
[8] The stone church of this convent on an island in Reykjavik harbour seems to be about the only mediæval building in Iceland which has survived.

the cloister had no monopoly; Gregory of Tours, Adam of Bremen, Roger of Hoveden, and Henry of Huntingdon were secular clerks.

In the later Middle Ages, monastic predominance is less pronounced. Froissart was an ordinary priest; Wavrin a knight. The regular clergy, however, never abandoned the rôle of recording contemporary events; the charming narrative on which Washington Irving based his "Conquest of Granada," was written by Agapida, a Franciscan. The "Greyfriars Chronicle" of London describes events from 1189 down to 1556, the last entries recording the burning of heretics by Mary.

Even such works as in early times were not written by monks at all, such as the "Saxon Chronicle" of Alfred, were apt to be preserved and continued in monasteries. In Iceland after the era of the *sagas* and *eddas* it was largely monks such as Arne of Thingore who kept such records as there are. In Eastern Europe the monks performed a very similar service; "Nestor" in Russia is a well known example.

That the keeping of records was a natural occupation for ascetics is most strikingly illustrated by the fact that in far off Japan, in the absence of any Confucian literati, records were kept chiefly by Buddhist monks, such as Kojima.

For little less than a millennium, from the days of S. Jerome and S. Augustine, till the times of such great secular poets as Petrarch, Boccaccio, Dante, and Chaucer little of literary moment was written in Europe for which monks were not more or less responsible. Here and there, indeed, a layman such as Boethius might cast a last ray of glory over the declining firmament of Rome, an archdeacon like Walter Map satirize his time and in scorn send an ass to visit the monastic houses, or an emperor such as Frederick II, patronize a culture with very different ideals; but nothing can change the fact that the literature of the early Middle Ages is predominantly monastic, little else.

There are writers such as Cædmon who, while not actually monks, owed everything to monastic education and shelter; and the monastic tradition extended far beyond precinct walls. If all monastic literature were blotted out, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that our knowledge of our own race for long centuries would be nebulous in the extreme.

This is indeed the case for a most important period, because the Welsh monks Nennius and Gildas had so little of the historic sense that marked the Venerable Bede. If the monks of West and East had done nothing to preserve the writings of antiquity, much of the story of Europe might be nearly as much matter of conjecture as the origins of Mexico and Peru. There are books such as the "De Tribus Impostoribus" [9] that would be of the utmost interest to our own day, but they seemed to the monks unworthy of preservation.

The great service rendered to humanity by monks by preserving the works of old is one that nobody will question, but it would probably be an exaggeration to say that they were entirely without helpers in the work.

It can hardly be claimed that this preëminently monastic era in literature is a brilliant one, far otherwise, indeed. It is but the long-drawn interval between the writings of Roman days and the first dawn of the national literatures of modern Europe. Hardly a writer, with the exception of Boethius, composed anything that could be claimed as one of the classics of the world. As pure literature perhaps the period gives us of its best in the *sagas* and *eddas* of Iceland.

Yet the monks gave us very much that the world could never afford to let die. If the qualities of an Augustan age are lacking, charm and inspiration, high idealism, real

[9] Moses, Christ and Mohammed. The work owed its origin to the very free atmosphere of the Sicilian court of Frederick II, and has sometimes been assigned to the Emperor himself.

faith and conviction are there. The early Benedictine period may be said to culminate in S. Anselm, whose great work "Cur Deus homo?" seeks to explain the need for the Incarnation—perhaps the chief problem of Christian theology —by insisting on the requirements of satisfying a debt according to the conceptions of Roman law.

Neither the Cluniac nor the Cistercian reforms were in the direction of fostering monastic scholarship; still less was this the case with the hermit orders. Nor were the different orders of canons concerned very much with such things. Nevertheless, the writings of S. Bernard exercised an influence both far-reaching and very great (p. 150). As the dictator of Europe, we have seen he left no enduring memorial, but his lengthy and almost Ciceronian sentences are in a sense the climax of monastic devotion. They influenced the writings of the early Franciscans; they inspired the "Imitatio Christi"; they are very frequently quoted by Calvin.

The purely devotional literature of the Middle Ages is mainly monastic, and there is an exceedingly uniform tradition both about it and the lives of the saints that can only be accounted for by the fact that from its daily reading during their meals (p. 80) it became exceedingly familiar to the monks. It was probably thus, rather than by direct plagiarism, that the same things are repeated so many times.

The culmination of the whole is in the "Imitatio Christi," one of the classics of the world, written as the sands of mediævalism were running low, and a generation or two after the period when literature was prevailingly monastic. Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471), of German birth, was trained among the Brethren of the Common Life at Deventer. The brothers sought to revive the life of the early Christians but took no vows. In their homes or in community they tried to live in poverty, chastity, and obedience. Thomas

afterwards went to a recently founded house of regular canons near Zwolle, of which his brother was Prior.

An eminent man of letters has described his great masterpiece as: "the flower of monastic poetry. It sets forth the monastic ideal in its passion, its beauty and all its imperfections. * * * But the book is immortal because of its passion, its truth, and its heroism. It is a noble exposition of one mode of spiritual life." [10]

The keynote of the whole seems to be given in the sentence: "Live in the world as a stranger and pilgrim, who has no concern with its business or pleasure." [11] "Would to God that we had no other employment, but with heart and voice to glorify His holy Name; that we never stood in need of meat, drink or sleep." [12] "It requires great skill to converse with Jesus, and great wisdom to know how to keep him." [13]

For pure beauty the work is almost unexcelled and the latter part in the form of a long dialogue between Christ and a disciple is as sublime in its own way as anything that literature can offer. It is the old monastic spirit springing forth anew.

Nothing about the material triumphs of monasticism for more than a thousand years, nothing about any special duty to fellow-man, simply the old message of the desert monks handed down through thirty generations. Salvation must be obtained by humble and fervent communion with our God. In the mouth of Christ are placed the words: "Abandon, therefore, all created things, that, by a faithful and pure adherence, thou mayest be acceptable to Him in Whom thou hast thy being, and in union with His Spirit enjoy everlasting felicity." [14]

[10] Henry Dwight Sedgwick, *Pro Vita Monastica*, p. 46.
[11] *Imitatio Christi*, bk. I, ch. xxiii, sec. 10.
[12] *Ib.*, I, xxv, 10.
[13] *Ib.*, III, viii, 3.
[14] *Ib.*, III, i, 2.

From the historical point of view, the supreme interest of the work lies in the fact that, purified, refined, and strengthened, we have Christian monasticism back at its earliest origins in tradition unbroken since the days of the Egyptian desert, affirming that if we desire assuredly to save our souls we can have time for nothing else.

Monastic chroniclers unblushingly copy each other, especially when recording the early story of the world, but when relating events of their own time, they have far more individuality than is at all usual in the devotional writings of monks. The tradition that the cloister was the best place for quiet and studious souls was so firmly established that many found their way thither who had little of the real spirit of asceticism. In his capacity of chronicler the monk by no means necessarily presents the clerical point of view. Matthew Paris himself, perhaps the most interesting of mediæval historians before Froissart reveals himself indeed a devout and fervent Churchman, but no layman could be more free in his criticism of clergy, not excepting even the Pope.

Doubtless a monastery on a frequented highway with its ceaseless stream of guests from every corner of the then known world was as good a place to learn the news as the Middle Ages afforded. At Reading guests came in every hour, and consumed more than the Cluniac monks of that house, but this was unusual.[15] Frequently events were jotted down year by year as interesting things became known to the monk who was keeping the record. Sometimes he evidently let months pass without making any entries at all—the simple and entirely natural explanation of the fact that the same events are not infrequently entered by different chroniclers under slightly different years.

[15] William of Malmesbury, *Chronicle of the Kings of England*, bk. V, p. 447, Giles' edition. The house was founded by Henry I, especially to serve as a convenient hostel for travellers from London to the West.

Despite the fact that Gratian, founder of the science of canon law at Bologna, was a Camaldolese and Abélard was also a monk—of a sort—the rise of universities was not promoted by monasticism, but by the secular clergy themselves. In the later Middle Ages the lamp of learning was very rapidly passing from monkish hands. We have seen (p. 114) that nuns were recommended not to keep schools by their most trusted advisers at an earlier time, and teaching was less and less in the hands of regular clergy. Each secular cathedral and collegiate church had a school attached, which was not the case with the monasteries. In the later monastic buildings, libraries are never prominent, though sometimes the scriptorium is a conspicuous feature of the cloisters.[16]

Dean Rashdall[17] has shown that there is almost no evidence at all to connect the rise of universities with monasticism, and in this connexion it is significant that the architecture of the college is in no way based upon that of the convent. While the latter evolved an unchanging plan in which church, chapter house, refectory, dormitory, and other chambers had their regular places round the cloister garth, nothing of the kind ever appeared in the college whose chapel, hall, library, and other buildings are found in every possible position round the quadrangle.

It was not until the very end of the Middle Ages, when Henry VI began the sumptuous chapel for his King's College at Cambridge that the first serious effort was made to give to university buildings any approach to the splendour of those of a monastery of the first class. The oldest colleges in England are relatively humble structures in no way more impressive than the large country houses in which their architectural prototypes must be sought. On the Continent the buildings of mediæval universities were even less impressive.

[16] As at Chester.

[17] In his most valuable *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols.

Even the later colleges of the latter part of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, such as New and Magdalen at Oxford, will not bear one moment's comparison with such an abbey as S. Alban's or Furness; and when Wolsey at Oxford and Alcock at Cambridge were transforming religious houses into colleges, they instinctively reduced the size of the chapels as unnecessarily large for academic worship.[18]

During the thirteenth century, however, when it appeared for a time that the torch of learning and literature was likely to slip from monastic hands almost entirely, the friars arose and strongly asserted ascetic leadership once more. S. Bonaventura (p. 88), the only very prominent Franciscan scholastic who was not British, is admirable in his devout mysticism, while still a master of dialectics, reviving the very best in the old tradition of monasticism.

It was mainly by the Franciscans at Oxford that the new revival was begun. That was a rather strange development when one remembers how completely S. Francis himself had subordinated knowledge to spirituality (p. 159). It is not very easy to imagine him at home in the lecture rooms of a university, but no one can bind his disciples of a later generation.

The two great orders of friars appear indeed to present us with a triple paradox. S. Francis cared little for learning, yet on the whole his sons have done rather more in that direction than the Dominicans; S. Francis was much more artistic in temperament than the Spaniard, yet the chief friar artists were Dominicians (p. 235); S. Francis had more democratic ideals than S. Dominic, yet the Dominicans produced by far the more liberal constitution (p. 194).

By Grosseteste, a Franciscan lecturer in the university, and rector of the schools, afterwards the renowned Bishop of Lincoln, important new methods were inaugurated—the

[18] The abbey of S. Frideswide at Oxford was converted into Christ Church; that of S. Radegund at Cambridge into Jesus College.

study of foreign languages and the use of exact mathematics as the basis of physical science.

By far the most distinguished of his pupils was Roger Bacon, whose ideals in science and particularly the need for practical experiment so largely adumbrate the work of his later namesake, Francis Bacon, Viscount S. Albans. He anticipated in some degree the invention of the telescope and of gunpowder in a rudimentary form; had he possessed the requisite equipment he might undoubtedly have become one of the greatest scientists of the world.

He was convinced that the study of the ancient languages and of mathematics was the proper basis for a liberal education. He desired the reading of Aristotle in his original Greek (while very fully realizing the value of the learning of the Arabs), and of the Bible in its original tongues.

All other studies were regarded by Bacon, as by more orthodox Franciscans, as leading up to theology. He defines philosophy as "the endeavour to arrive at a knowledge of the Creator through knowledge of the created world,[19] thus anticipating a vast field of modern ideals. To a great extent Roger Bacon was the real founder of the liberal English Franciscan tradition, anticipating Duns Scotus and William of Ockham.

The Dominicans, under the inspiration of S. Thomas Aquinas (1228-1274), rigidly maintained the straitest orthodoxy. Christ's death was the only possible satisfaction for the sins of the world; the extreme views of S. Augustine were taught concerning predestination; S. Anselm and S. Bernard were followed in the matter of the Immaculate Conception.

The English Franciscan, Alexander of Hales, who died in Paris, 1245, a thoroughgoing realist, was responsible for the theory of the *thesaurus meritorum,* or treasure-house of the merits of the saints, and of Christ Himself, at the dis-

[19] *Opus maius* (Bridges), I, 42.

posal of the Church which might be made available by means of indulgences—a conception of much interest as largely responsible for the doctrinal enquiries in the famous theses of another friar, Martin Luther, in 1517.

Eventually in the hands of Duns Scotus (d. 1308) and William of Ockham (c. 1280-1349) the Franciscan school became in some respects more liberal than the Dominican. The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin was maintained, but it was held that God might have accepted anything else than the death of Christ as expiation for the sins of the world; good and bad depend purely on the will of God. Man has effective free will.

Although his own pupil, Ockham represents a reaction against Scotus, returning to something very like the conceptualism of Abélard, while on every philosophical question he takes a line which, as Dean Rashdall says, represents the perfection of common sense.[20] In theology, while maintaining the old monastic doctrine of the poverty of Christ and His disciples, he declines to apply reason to faith. This was left, largely, for John Wyckliffe, the next great Oxford schoolman, the vigorous opponent of friars and all their works.[21]

Even in the days of the Renaissance monasticism had by no means lost its force. Erasmus and Luther, though neither had very much of the true ascetic spirit, both owed their education mainly to the cloister, and both became regulars, Erasmus a canon, Luther a friar. Despite all the activities of his later life in a very different direction, Luther retained to the end at least this much of the monastic spirit, that, living in an age of amazingly expanding knowledge, neither in his letters, nor his table talk, nor in any of his extremely voluminous writings does he display any real interest in any

[20] *Universities of Europe*, vol. II, p. 536.

[21] Though monks never played any great part at the universities, the Benedictine order maintained at Oxford Gloucester Hall, whose buildings now form part of Worcester College.

other subject than theology. All the art and the maritime discoveries of that brilliant age left him absolutely cold.

In the famous incident at the Wartburg, when he hurled his ink-pot at the devil, he gave another proof of the abiding force of the permanence in monasticism of the ideas of the Egyptian monks. In many ways the far kindlier and more lovable Erasmus, though ever unwilling with the reformers to rend the seamless robe of Christ, reacted even further than Luther from the ancient monastic spirit.

It is noteworthy that in the realm of foreign exploration, which was one of the chief achievements of the Renaissance, very many actors and writers belonged to the religious orders. In no continent is it possible to ignore the geographical works of the regulars; in mere information they undoubtedly contributed at least as much as the laity. If we desire any detailed knowledge of early Western intercourse with China and Japan, of exploration in Abyssinia or Michigan, of the dialects of negro tribes or the mysteries of Far Eastern islands, it is to the writings of the monastic missionaries that we must turn.

Scholastic discussion was unfortunately revived when in 1588 the Portuguese Jesuit, Molina, published a book taking what was practically a semi-Pelagian (p. 103) view of the vexed question of predestination. The Jesuits, always liberal in their theology, accepted the work, but the Dominicans vehemently supported the strict Augustinian view, which had become widely diffused through Protestant Europe by the vigorous propaganda of the Calvinists.

This monastic discussion was inevitably carried to the Papal court, but successive Popes wisely let the question rest till it was revived by the publication, by Cornelius Jansen, a Dutch bishop, of a learned folio in support of the traditional faith. This was condemned by the Pope, but many, nevertheless, rallied to the defence of Jansen's views. (The Bishop himself had died in 1638.)

The most interesting of them was the Frenchman, Blaise Pascal, who became identified with the famous Jansenist cloister-school, which was established at the ancient Cistercian Convent of Port Royal, when the nuns had removed to Paris. The age of Louis XIV was convulsed by the controversy which, for the modern reader, is complicated by the fact that though Pascal is in some ways more lovable than his Jesuit opponents, his virtually Calvinistic theology seems quite impossible today.

A more satisfactory subject is the magnificent work of the Maurists, a congregation of French Benedictines who, from the early years of the seventeenth century till the revolution, devoted themselves to historical criticism and erudition of value to all scholars. The beginnings of the work received the encouragement of Richelieu. Generation after generation coöperated to edit the Fathers and collect historical material on a scale hardly dreamed of before in the history of the world, at any rate not in connexion with the annals of the Christian Church. The congregation was fortunate in the services of a succession of able scholars of whom Mabillon is the best known, but apparently in its great convent of S. Germain-des-Prés there was a tendency for scholarship to get the better of purely monastic devotion. And worse scandals arose with which we need not be concerned (p. 209).

A similar work among the Jesuits began about the same time and is still continued, being concerned with editing and investigating the *acta sanctorum*. It takes its name from a Dutch Jesuit, John van Bolland (1596-1665), but he was not the first founder of the movement.

That monasticism has produced any great share of the first writings of mankind, or has contributed many of its great classics to the world, is not to be maintained. It is hardly possible in the realm of pure literature to place Augustine's "City of God" or Thomas à Kempis' "Imitation of Christ" on the same pedestal as Shakespeare's

Plays, or indeed anywhere near so high. Probably it must frankly be confessed that in the temple of letters there are but few outstanding monks. In nearly every case their chronicles, lives of saints, meditations, and revelations are of far greater interest than of pure literary merit.

This is no reproach. The founders of Christian monasticism (and apparently living monks such as Delatte) would rather be ashamed that monks have written so much than regretful that they devoted no more attention to letters.

Yet even in the shrine of literature the monk must be assigned a very honoured place. In its very darkest hours it was he that guarded learning and preserved it from utter loss. Who knows if even Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, or Johnson's literary club could have been what in fact they were but for the background provided by the monks?

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Many of the works of my fellow Wykenhamist, Arthur F. Leach, particularly *The Schools of Mediæval England* and *English Schools at the Reformation* are of the very utmost importance in connexion with the subject of this chapter. Starting from his researches into the history of Winchester College, he has become a great champion of the secular clergy against the monks, particularly in the domain of learning.

Dean Rashdall's *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (2 vols.) is quite indispensable for the origin of the universities and their capture for a time by the friars.

It is most difficult to say exactly how far monks alone preserved the writings of antiquity. A few facts of interest in that connexion may be gained from F. W. Hall's *Companion to Classical Texts,* Oxford, 1913.

CHAPTER XV

MONASTIC ART

On no subject, perhaps, has the ordinary student, even though tolerably well versed in mediæval history, more confused ideas than on that of monastic contributions to art, whether sculpture, painting, or architecture. While the undoubted activities of the monk on many lines are hardly realized at all, they are here frequently grotesquely exaggerated. The monk is not seldom given credit for work that perhaps no monk ever saw.

That monasticism made its influence felt in all branches of Christian art will hardly be denied, but it is by no means so clear that there was ever a monastic school. Parish churches and secular cathedrals were seldom slow to adopt conventual designs and the influence was wholly reciprocal.

In the earliest times, very logically, art was not deemed suited to monks' surroundings at all. Of their first Father we read: "The blessed man Pachomius built an oratory in his monastery, and he made pillars for it, and covered them with tiles, and he furnished it beautifully, and he was exceedingly pleased with the work because he had built it well.

"But when he came to himself he declared, through the agency of Satan, that the beauty of the oratory was a thing which would compel a man to admire it, and that the building thereof would be praised. Then suddenly he rose up and took ropes, and fastened them round the pillars, and he made a prayer within himself, and commanded the brethren to help him, and they bowed their bodies, and the pillars and

the whole construction fell to the ground. And he said to the brethren: 'Take heed lest ye strive to ornament the work of your hands overmuch, and take ye the greatest possible care that the grace of God and His gift may be in the work of each one of you, so that the mind may not stumble towards the praises of cunning wickedness, and the calumniator may not obtain his prey.'" [1] Such prejudices were gradually overcome and monks were soon building churches as stately and as superbly adorned as any to be found in the world.

It seems clear enough that in very early Christian times there was a marked difference between the ritual arrangements of a church attended by laity and an oratory in which monks said their offices. An ancient form of the parish church may still be studied at Rome, particularly in S. Clemente.

The altar stands in the apse with a bench of stone having a central arm chair round behind it. The eastern part of the nave is enclosed by *cancelli* or railings to form a chancel in which the choir stand, and on either side is an *ambo* or pulpit; from that on the north the Gospel was read, the Epistle from that on the south. This is the oldest arrangement known, and it has nothing to do with monks.

A monastic oratory had no nave at all, for the presence of laity was entirely undesired.[2] Cassian gives a very interesting hint as to the arrangement of the choir: "This canonical system of twelve psalms they render easier by such bodily rest that when, after their custom, they celebrate those services, they all, except the one who stands up in the midst to recite the psalms, sit in very low stalls and follow the voice of the singer with the utmost attention of heart. For they are so worn out with fasting and working all day and night that, unless they were helped by some such indul-

[1] *The Rule of Pachomius at Tabenna*, ch. xvi. Budge, *Paradise of the Holy Fathers*, vol. i, p. 310.

[2] This is very clear from the whole tenor of early monastic writings.

gence, they could not possibly get through this number standing up." [3]

Monastic choir stalls thus evidently date from the earliest times, and they must have been ranged against the walls leaving a wide open space in the centre. But it is clear from the famous plan of the vast Irish abbey of S. Gall, in Switzerland (p. 179), dating early in the ninth century,[4] that they were not universal. That great church was so much too large for the monks that it was divided up into several chapels by screens with a multiplicity of altars. The *chorus* must have stood within *cancelli,* for no stalls are shown, though in the space before the steps leading to the high altar are four *formulæ,* or desks from which portions of the service were recited.

This is illustrated by the fact that Somers Clarke found suggestions of *cancelli* in the big monastic church of Dêr Amba Shnûla (Dêr el Abiad) near Sohag in Egypt.[5] Eventually *cancelli* became quite obsolete and the monastic stalls were adopted in churches of all kinds, secular cathedrals, collegiate, and even parish churches no less than those used by the monks. Often splendidly carved and canopied, stalls became one of the noblest features of Christian architecture in Western Europe.[6] In the East no seats are provided for choir and laity, and in this respect there is no difference between monastic and secular churches of the Orthodox Communion.

M. Albert Lenoir seems to go very far beyond any evidence we have in his sweeping statement: "As soon as St. Benedict had set forth in his rule that architecture, paint-

[3] *Institutes,* bk. II, ch. xii.

[4] The author is unknown; Mabillon guessed Einhard (p. 93).

[5] He cautiously adds: "It has, however, to be shown by those learned in such matters that in monastic churches of this remote period in Egypt any such ritual arrangement was in use as would demand *cancelli.*" *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley,* p. 155.

[6] A fair idea can be obtained in the Episcopal cathedral at Albany, N. Y., whose stalls were brought from Flanders.

ing, mosaic, sculpture, and all the branches of art should be studied in monasteries, it became the first duty of the abbots, priors, and deans, to make plans of churches and secondary buildings of the communities that they were called upon to rule. It follows that from the first Christian centuries up to the twelfth or thirteenth, architecture, the science deemed sacred and holy, was practised only by the religious." [7]

He proceeds to give descriptions of many of the early basilicas, especially those in Rome, as the work of monks, but without a particle of proof. The magnificent basilica at Bethlehem certainly antedates them all as well as anticipating most of their features. It was erected by S. Helena,[8] certainly not under monastic auspices, though before very long ascetics may have been in charge of it, as is now the case. It must have been in process of construction about the very time that Pachomius was tearing down his oratory as too beautiful for the worship of monks.

It would appear to be a virtually impossible task to assign many of the early Christian churches to monastic or secular builders, nor would such a division, if it could be made, have any particular significance. There certainly were no separate schools of secular and monastic Church art, either then or at any other period, although monks did undoubtedly evolve an exceedingly striking and beautiful plan for their buildings which was widely copied by secular canons, but never by college dons (p. 216).

In most of its chief features this is complete in the plan of the Abbey of S. Gall already mentioned, which is a document of the most extraordinary interest. The church is on such a scale as to have dominated its whole surroundings quite as much as in any later mediæval abbey, though the building has no transepts, but forms a large basilica with

[7] *Architecture Monastique* (1852), vol. i, pp. 34-35. Lenoir seems most unwarrantably to have expanded S. Benedict's simple provisions about work for his monks.

[8] Socrates, *Eccl. Hist.*, I, xvii.

apse at either end, and detached from the western end are two round towers on whose summits stand altars to S. Michael and S. Gabriel respectively. These were later replaced by western towers flanking the façade of the church, as the general scheme was gradually developed.

Apart from the church, the very extensive monastic buildings rather closely resemble a section of the richer portion of Pompeii or of some other Roman town. Each structure is grouped round an open court providing very ample space for infirmary, guest house, school, abbot's mansion, stables, servants' quarters, and very extensive farm buildings.

By far the largest of all the courts is the cloister, standing immediately south of the church, its four walks opening by arches to the central garth or "paradise" as it was later called. Along the south side is the refectory with kitchen to its west; the western side of the cloister is occupied by cellars and store rooms above them; on the east the upper building is the monks' dormitory.[9]

All this is in accordance with the usual mediæval plan, but instead of a chapter house there is a warming house under the dormitory, and east of the refectory (where the warming house was later to be found) is a bath, a feature not deemed necessary as the traditions of Roman methods of living got fainter in the latter part of the Middle Ages.

This comprehensive monastic plan, with its superb views of church and other buildings, seen in constantly varying groups through the open arches or windows across the cloister grass as one saunters round the four walks, was perhaps the greatest contribution that monasticism ever made to architecture. It is so superbly beautiful that it certainly is not

[9] It is rather remarkable that the library is only a small chamber over the room where MSS. were copied, structurally part of the church matching the vestry, one on either side of the choir. Some of the Latin inscriptions which explain the plan are in the conditional; it is probable that the plan was not carried out at the time the drawing was made, if ever. This, of course, makes little or no difference to its value.

surprising to find it very widely imitated in secular cathedrals and churches. Sometimes, as at Salisbury, the cloisters and chapter house were erected in the ordinary monastic position; sometimes, as at Lincoln, in a totally different one. Here, in fact, as at Wells, the chapter house and cloisters were built entirely apart.

The cloister is in itself a feature of such rare charm that it seems quite proper to see it introduced in all sorts of unexpected positions as it could be got in; at Rouen Cathedral we find a double cloister walk on the north side of the nave; at Chichester, toward the end of the Middle Ages, three cloister walks were provided, enclosing a beautiful garth, into which the south transept projects, but the existence of other buildings prevented the walks being regular or even at right angles to each other.

Evidently it was not until about the eleventh century that the monastic cloister plan won universal recognition. The Abbey of Croyland, raised over the place where the Mercian hermit, S. Guthlac (d. 714) had settled in search of solitude among the fens of Lincolnshire, during the tenth century, followed no regular plan. On the west side of the court stood stable, bakehouse, and granary; on the south were the guesten hall and connected chambers; on the east, the tailors' room, the hall of converts and the abbot's chamber, chapel, hall, and kitchen; the great gateway opened on the north.[10] Nearly all was of timber, and in 1091 the whole abbey was burned by the carelessness of a plumber who left a fire merely covered with ashes in the tower of the church overnight.

The subsequent history of the house was typical of that of many another abbey. It was magnificently rebuilt in the usual Norman style, undoubtedly according to the usual cloister plan. An arch of the central tower and other Norman

[10] Maitland, *Dark Ages*, p. 250; his account based on the writings of Ingulph, Abbot in 1091.

parts yet stand, while many ornamented caps and bases are used as foundation for the later piers of the nave—for a rebuilding was made necessary again when the greater part was blown down during a furious storm.[11]

To judge by the style of what exists, the work went on very slowly. All is in ruin except the north aisle of the nave which still remains, what it always was, the parish church of the little town that gathered round the house.

In the East it seems that no monastic plan was ever evolved—to the very great loss in charm of the convents of the Orthodox Communion. The church generally stands more or less detached, surrounded by the dwellings of the monks with hardly more plan than is to be found in the cottages of an ancient village. Sometimes the necessities for defence cause the buildings to be very compact. The beautiful Western form of the cloister is nearly unknown in the East, except as the result of foreign influence. The Crusaders built a cloister against the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. The singularly beautiful monastic church at Daphne, on the high road from Athens to Eleusis, has the ruins of a cloister on its southern side, but this was certainly the work of the Frank Dukes of Athens, some of whom are buried in the building. Their thirteenth century additions in the style of Western Europe do not harmonize very well with the original Byzantine work. The East, lacking the Western fondness for organization, has never made quite the same clear distinction between cathedrals, parish churches, and conventual chapels that is so characteristic of the West.

It is noteworthy that we do not find in the ordinary monastic plan a church specially adapted for conventual purposes. Large naves were retained, though they served no particular purpose and were indeed almost disused unless the abbey church was also a cathedral or partly used by a

[11] Recorded by "Matthew of Westminster" in 1262.

parish congregation. Apparently the nave of a purely monastic church served no other purpose than for the Sunday procession and as a place of sepulture. It was almost invariably separated from the choir by so heavy a screen that it was impossible to use the church as a whole.

This was a fashion largely copied in secular churches, such as Exeter and York. It certainly increases the effect of vastness and mystery which is so great a charm of Gothic architecture, but for congregational purposes it is not very convenient.

Most unusual but exceedingly interesting examples of churches designed purely for monastic purposes may be seen at Kelso, an abbey (Benedictine of the order of Tiron) that was one of the most important in Scotland, at Ely and at Bury St. Edmunds. At the west end is provided a square and aisleless transept at whose intersection with the nave rises a magnificent castle-like tower, presenting, even as a broken ruin, at Kelso, a most striking and dominating effect, while at Ely it is one of the noblest architectural monuments of the world. But this splendid feature seems to have had nothing to do with the ritual arrangements of the monks. It led to no definitely monastic style.

It seems to have had no imitators. In later times collegiate churches were designed with the nave omitted, the transept forming an ante-chapel. New, Magdalen, and All Souls Colleges at Oxford are examples.

All scruples that may have survived from early times as to the magnificence of monastic churches were soon set aside. In some European countries, notably Ireland and Scotland, the abbeys were finer than the cathedrals, while in no land whatever are conventual churches conspicuously overshadowed by any others.

The Cistercians at first made a determined effort to return to primitive simplicity and S. Bernard most vigorously denounces the architectural splendour of Cluny, happily uncon-

scious that in less than a century monks of his own order would be worshipping in buildings of equal splendour. "O vanity of vanities! but not more vain than foolish. The church's walls are resplendent, but the poor are not there. * * *

"Why at least do we not reverence the images of the saints, with which the very pavement we walk on is covered? Often an angel's mouth is spit into, and the face of some saint trodden on by passers-by. * * * But if we cannot do without the images, why can we not spare the brilliant colours? What has all this to do with monks, with professors of poverty, with men of spiritual minds?

"Again in the cloisters, what is the meaning of those ridiculous monsters, of that deformed beauty, that beautiful deformity, before the very eyes of the brethren when reading? What are disgusting monkeys there for, or ferocious lions, or monstrous centaurs, or spotted tigers, or fighting soldiers, or huntsmen sounding the bugle? You may see there one head with many bodies, or one body with numerous heads. Here is a quadruped with a serpent's tail; there is a fish with a beast's head; there a creature, in front a horse, behind a goat; another has horns at one end, and a horse's tail at the other.

"In fact, such an endless variety of forms appears everywhere, that it is more pleasant to read in the stone work than in books, and to spend the day in admiring these oddities than in meditating on the law of God."

The Cistercians ever preserved a dignified simplicity, that was shown chiefly in omitting carved details, and is rather an improvement than otherwise. The French antiquary, M. Enlart, expresses it exactly in speaking of *"Une certaine simplicité de bon goût que l'on pourrait considérer comme un raffinement de plus."* [12] With all its Cistercian sim-

[12] *Manuel d'Archéologie française;* I, 1902, 202.

plicity the Nine Altars at Fountains must have been one of the loveliest monuments of Gothic architecture in Europe.

How very little a monastic style can be said to have existed is evident from the fact that no two large mediæval buildings have a closer resemblance than the cathedral at Sens and the choir of Canterbury; both were erected under the supervision of the same master mason, William of Sens, yet the French church was always secular, the English one, till the Reformation, monastic. Canterbury Cathedral is of great importance as the first instance of Gothic forms superseding Romanesque in England. It is thus particularly interesting to know on the authority of a most detailed monastic record that the credit must be given to a French layman.[13]

Both the designers of the great French cathedrals and the Italian *maestri Comacini* (for whom Merzario has made such claims) were laity, and it is impossible to assign to the regulars any very important share in the development of mediæval architecture.

Contrary to a very general impression, the monk was rather a patron of art than himself a skilled craftsman. In his second Lowell lecture (1923) G. G. Coulton, of Cambridge University, entirely demolished Montalembert's contention that monks with their own hands normally either built or painted or carved. They sometimes did, but it was the rare exception, not the rule.

At Ramsey, in Huntingdonshire, we read concerning the erection of the Saxon abbey, that "the labourers, inspired as much by the warmth of their pious devotion as by their

[13] Gervase, a monk of Canterbury, gives a minute description of the rebuilding of the choir at Canterbury after the fire of 1174. English and French artificers disagreed in their advice as to how much of the old masonry must be destroyed and the monks were much in doubt till there came *"quidam Senonensis, Willelmus nomine, vir admodum strenuus, in ligno et lapide artifex subtilissimus,"* who completely won their confidence and planned the choir which still exists. It was a monk that took his place as director when the health of William failed.

desire for pay were instant with their toil." [14] Gilbert, Abbot of Westminster, in his "Life of Lanfranc," tells us that on arriving at Bec he found Herluin building an oven with his own hands, but later he (Lanfranc) earned money by teaching school, to pay workmen for the building. A very interesting illustration of the whole point is to be studied at Gloucester, where a section of the nave vault was built by the monks themselves and not like the rest by the workmen. The stone roof in question still exists and, beautiful as it is, the work has a distinctly amateurish look, particularly in the way the ribs are crowded.[15] The occasions on which monks had anything directly to do with the building of their own churches seem to be surprisingly few. A striking example is the well known case of the very humble little chapel built for the Greyfriars at Cambridge, so poor a structure that one man in one day made and set up fourteen pairs of rafters, but it was not a friar—*"unus carpentarius."* [16]

At the same time, it must be remembered that one of the most striking features of all architecture, the central octagon at Ely, was designed by a monk, who also planned the Lady Chapel of the same cathedral, and the Church of Little St. Mary, at Cambridge—Alan de Walsingham, the sub-Prior. Though this splendid structure found no imitator during the Middle Ages, Ely octagon certainly suggested the treatment that became one of the most distinctive features of Renaissance work of which S. Paul's is the finest example.

It would be a perfectly impossible task to write a history of architecture, assigning due credit to both monastic and secular creators, for their contributions are everywhere inter-

[14] *Chronicon Abbatiæ Rameseiensis*, anno 969.

[15] *Historia Monasterii S. Petri Gloucestriæ* (*Rolls Series*), 1242. *"Completa est nova volta in navi ecclesiæ, non auxilio fabrorum ut primo, sed animosa virtute monachorum item in ipso loco existentium."*

[16] Thomas de Eccleston: *De adventu Minorum in Angliam*, Collatio iii. *Monumenta Franciscana*, I, 18.

twined. Not infrequently we find what might be supposed to be the most purely conventual features in churches that were always secular. At S. David's, in Wales, we see in addition to a hugely massive screen of stone completely shutting off the nave, a light wooden one separating the choir stalls from the sanctuary, which would seem most suitable for a monastic community saying their numerous offices, but the cathedral was always secular and the same screen before the altar is found in parish churches, for example S. Martin's at Colchester.

College chapels of the mediæval period are much more unlike ordinary parish churches than are the oratories in which monks used to pray. It would be far easier to believe in a collegiate than in a monastic architectural style.

There are, nevertheless, a few quite distinctively monastic forms in building in addition to those already mentioned. The Knights Templars introduced into Western Europe the circular form of the Church of the Sepulchre, and some of their reproductions of it may still be seen. An admirable example is the Temple Church in London (now used by two Inns of Court), a relatively large building with an aisle all round; at Laon is a very tiny aisleless church that displays the same features on a much smaller scale. At Sompting in Sussex the Templars seem to have attempted to reproduce the effect of the little curtained side chapels that complicate the plan of the Church of the Sepulchre.

In the British Isles the friars during the fifteenth century evolved a form of church peculiarly their own, of which very many examples remain in every part of Ireland. The large nave which served for preaching is separated from the chancel (which formed the friars' choir) by a tall and very narrow tower, hexagonal, octagonal, or square, resting upon arches frequently so narrow and low that the two portions of the church appear to be connected by a mere tunnel. The details are rather thin and poor in nearly every case and the form

is not pleasing; evidently it was deemed specially suited to strict ascetics, and it is found at the Carthusian house of Mount Grace (p. 118).

This type of church appears to be almost confined to monastic use, but it may be seen in the rather poor little secular cathedral at Leighlin, County Carlow, in Ireland. The largest and most striking surviving example is the Dominican church, now S. Andrew's Hall, at Norwich. The friars reproduced the ordinary cloister plan of the monks, but nearly invariably placed the church on the south instead of the north side of the convent.[17]

In late mediæval and early Renaissance days the friars of all four orders, but particularly the Franciscans and Dominicans, were great patrons of art. Very many of the works of the masters adorned their convents and churches, but there is nothing distinctly monastic about them. It was in strange contrast with the original profession of absolute poverty, more especially as the friar in most cases employed secular masters to paint the pictures with which his home was made beautiful.

Three friars may claim to stand among the masters, but they hardly form any school. Fra Angelico (1387-1455) is justly famed for the pure holiness of his superb pictures. Especially in his angels and his figures of Christ with their wonderful colouring and exquisite detail, we seem to get some reflexion of the saintly life of their maker, but even so, for true spirituality they can hardly be said to excel the well-known head of Christ that was painted by the scoffing Leonardo da Vinci. Fra Angelico was a Dominican and long lived at the convent of San Marco in Florence, where so many of his works may still be seen.

Fra Filippo Lippi (c. 1412-1469) was a Carmelite, but his life reflected little credit on the order, and he afterwards

[17] There are plenty of cases of the monks' doing this, as at Gloucester, Sherborne, and Melrose, but it was exceptional.

lived with a nun. The flowing beauty of his draperies and admirable technique give him a great place among artists, but his rather voluptuous figures and interest in the nude do not suggest the craft of a monk.

Fra Bartolommeo (1469-1517), the friend of Savonarola and later of Raphael, was an excellent and devout Dominican friar, whose pictures possess a very true atmosphere of religious fervour and devotion, while his angels and saints display a tenderness and sweet dignity that suggests that, had conditions been favourable to it, a truly monastic school of painting might quite easily have been brought into being.

Eccleston tells us that a pulpit at Gloucester was painted by a friar during the first generation, about 1230, while another, Nicolas de Renham, made some ornamental ironwork for a chapel in the Greyfriars' church at London.[18] But at no time did the cultivation of the arts form any serious part of the programme of the monastic orders.

Church embroidery and the illumination of manuscripts, particularly the latter, form more distinctively ascetic crafts, but even so, neither of them seems to have been practised solely in religious houses. There is no doubt that from the time of Cassiodorus (p. 210) monks devoted much time and labour to the reproduction of manuscripts, and that in course of time they took pride in beautiful illuminations for capital letters, and sometimes whole pages.

This work was performed in all parts of Europe, but in some respects reached its greatest perfection in Ireland, where the traditional interlacing coils of Celtic art lent themselves most appropriately to such decoration. We certainly do not know definitely how many books were copied by monks and how many by others; probably there has sometimes been a tendency to exaggerate the part taken by religious, especially during the later Middle Ages when not infrequently

[18] Kingsford, *Grey Friars of London;* British Society of Franciscan Studies, VI, pp. 202-203.

their interest in scholarship so decreased as to cause them to dispose of their libraries.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Jesuits came near forming at that late date a truly monastic architecture by their well known fondness for the Barocco style, a form of Classic that made much of queer shells, festoons, and waving scrolls disposed so as to form a framework for such painting over roof and wall as Rubens loved to carry out. In atmosphere it was completely different from anything that convents ever knew before.

Though not, of course, confined to the Jesuits—there are, in fact, plenty of Protestant examples—such work in their hands at one time bid fair in almost every quarter of the globe to lay the foundations of a truly conventual style, and it is much to be regretted that the order has now abandoned it for very ordinary Gothic in most of its newer fabrics, as at Milwaukee, Cincinnati, and St. Louis. In a new country especially, the stately and impressive Classic style that is exemplified in so many of the old Jesuit colleges, would seem to have possibilities that can never be supplied by forms that reached their perfection, and then naturally died, as the life of mediævalism ebbed away.

No style of monastic art was ever destined to appear; the monk was too much tied up with his fellows for anything of the kind to be possible, but all art would be very much poorer without the contributions that the religious have made.

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CHAPTER XVI

THE DECLINE OF THE GREAT MEDIÆVAL ORDERS

It is impossible not to feel that just as the mediæval system rose with monasticism, so in the later years of the Middle Ages it was the regulars that heralded the decay of that momentous and, on the whole, splendid period of history.

Generally speaking, it appears to have been the case that throughout the Middle Ages monks living in the country were popular with their neighbours, but those that dwelt in cities were not infrequently disliked. A very long letter which Peter the Venerable wrote to S. Bernard (p. 135) in reply to Cistercian charges against the Cluniac order, emphatically and confidently justifies monasteries holding lands on the ground that monks treated their serfs far better than did lay lords: "Now monks, although they do own such things treat them not similarly but in a very different way.

"They use only the lawful and proper services of the villeins for the conveniences of life; they do not worry them with unlawful exactions; they impose no intolerable burdens upon them. If they see that they are in want they help them from their own property. Serfs and handmaidens they hold not as such but as brothers and sisters." [1]

This claim seems certainly, on the whole, to have been very well founded. The failings of Chaucer's monk are not such as to make him disliked either by the serfs belonging to his abbey or by his country neighbours. The suppression

[1] *Epist.* Lib. II, *Ep.* xxviii; Migne, *P.L.* 189, col. 146.

of the great Northern abbeys of England caused the pilgrimage of grace; at Bayham and elsewhere in the South, the country people attempted by force to prevent the ejection of the religious. Certainly, as a general rule, the monks were kindly as landlords and friendly as neighbours.

In cities, conditions were different. Monks were often unpopular even in places that owed their existence to the presence of the convent. Feeling that they were trustees and had no right to give away what belonged to God and holy Church, the religious were extremely slow to grant charters permitting the townspeople to manage their own affairs, and this put them at a great disadvantage with rivals more fortunately situated.

At Norwich there were several fights between the citizens and the monks, one of which (in 1272) was exceedingly serious, involving much destruction of property and a number of deaths. At Bury S. Edmund's may still be seen a gateway behind whose statues are loop-holes for arrows so that the figures of saints could defend their church by being pushed down onto assailants with flights of arrows to follow. At Sherborne there was perpetual friction between town and cowl about the use of the common church, and the glorious late Gothic work that still survives is owed to the disgraceful events which Leland thus chronicles under the date 1436.

"The body of the abbay chirch dedicate to our Lady servid ontille a hundrith yeres syns for the chife paroche chirch of the town. This was the cause of the abolition of the paroche chirch there.

"The monkes and the townes men felle at variance by cause the townes men took privilege to use the sacrament of baptism in the chapelle of Alhalowes. Whereapon one Walter Gallor, a stoute bucher, dwelling in Shirburn, defacid clene the font-stone and after the variance growing to a playne sedition and the townesmenne by the meanes of an

erle of Huntendune, lying yn those quarters and taking the townes-mennes part, and the bishop of Saresbyri (Salisbury) the monkes part, a prest of Alhalowes shot a shaft with fier into the toppe of that part of St. Marys chirch that divided the Est part that the monkes usid, from that the townes-men usid; and this partition chauncing at that tyme to be thakkid yn the rofe was sette afire and consequently al the hole chirch, the lede and belles meltid, was defacid."

So a nearly complete rebuilding had to be undertaken.

It can hardly be taken as merely accidental that while Chaucer describes a saintly and ideal parish priest and a good earnest clerk of Oxford who kept books beside his bed, his friar is a rascal, self-seeking, unscrupulous and mean; his monk a luxurious, sport-loving country geneleman, inclined to laugh at the founder of his own order, and his nun a coquettish and dainty lady, making little serious attempt to keep any rule.

The summoner and pardoner indeed were worse than any of the monastic characters—or come to that any of the rest—but it is impossible to read the "Prologue" without feeling that in the middle of the fourteenth century mediæval monasticism had seen its best days. This impression is enhanced by the writings of Chaucer's contemporaries, Langland (Piers Plowman) and Wyckliffe, even making the fullest allowances for the fact that both were avowedly hostile to friars.

William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, in his statutes for his colleges at Winchester and Oxford (1400), recites that a diligent examination of the various rules of the religious orders and a comparison of the lives of their several professors does not anywhere reveal that the ordinances of their founders, according to their true design and intention, are at present being observed by any of them.

Even at a much earlier time, during the thirteenth century, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion from existing remains

that life in a monastery must have been more materially comfortable than life in a castle or manor house. No contemporary dwelling of laymen that has survived can compare for solid comfort with the well-preserved domestic buildings of Fountains Abbey, dating mostly from the thirteenth century. Archæological evidence entirely confirms S. Bernard's complaints (p. 136) and that in houses of his own order. Bodiam castle in Sussex, which was built about 1386 by Sir Edward Dalyngruge, after some time spent in France, and which is largely a pioneer in the domestic comfort of fortified country mansions, is hardly so pleasant a dwelling.

And in later mediæval years very numerous bishops' registers in their accounts of monastic visitations, give a truly terrible picture of the general state of religion as sometimes practised by the monks. As a rule, the smaller the house and the fewer monks it contained, the less efforts there were apt to be to maintain the rule of the order.

This S. Benedict had foreseen (p. 78) and S. Bernard in his letter to the Abbot of an Alpine abbey refers to "synagogues of Satan, that is little cells outside the cenobium where three or four brothers live without either order or rule." [2] A very good example is the Priory of S. Peter, at Sele in Sussex, which when visited by Bishop Praty (of Chichester) in 1441 contained but three monks besides the Prior, and he had secured his office by simony and was guilty of gross immorality. He neglected the services and wasted the resources of the house.[3]

In the larger houses such irregularities were far more rare. A considerable body of men living together will be less easily induced to ignore the rule than only two or three. But what is perhaps more impressive than any actual cor-

[2] *Ep.* CCLIV; Migne, *P.L.* 182, col. 459.

[3] The *chartulary* of this priory was edited in 1923, by my friend L. F. Salzman, F.S.A., from a MS. belonging to Magdalen College, Oxford, which secured the property of the house in 1480, despite the resistance of a sole surviving monk.

ruption is that fact that although very few monasteries were founded after the thirteenth century (but see p. 116), those that existed were not far from empty long before the dissolution in England.

At Ely, apparently, there were but twenty-five monks when a dean with secular chapter was substituted for the monastic body.[4] At the other large abbeys things were much the same. Some had virtually become rather aristocratic clubs and in any case the number seeking admission was much smaller than in earlier days. Stephen Hawes, in his learned but crabbed allegory the "Pastime of Pleasure," [5] has his hero, Grand Amoure, after passing through the fair meadow of youth, choose the way of active life in preference to monasticism.

There is any quantity of evidence that such views were practically universal at the time. More in his "Utopia" scores the conduct of "certain abbots, holy men no doubt." Erasmus in his letters is exceedingly biting. The monk does not lead an honest and sober life, still less does he care for industry or learning; so long as he is the slave of a superior as worthless as himself, he is within his holy obedience. Erasmus himself was singularly unfitted to the profession into which he had been forced.

We cannot help feeling that there was some personal resentment when he scornfully referred to monastic stability as living the life of a sponge. There is absolutely no need to go for evidence to those who accepted the Reformation.

Monasticism had lost its ancient popularity and the difficulties of dissolution were greatly lessened by the relatively small number of monks to be dispossessed. This would never be suspected from any inspection of the ruins that remain. Building continued in great vigour up to the very end. In fact when the dissolution was feared there was a

[4] See Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, I, 252.
[5] Printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1509.

tendency to spend all spare cash in building, that there might be nothing to tempt the cupidity of a reformer.

Thus at Fountains the noble tower was hardly finished when the house was destroyed. At Bolton a similar work was only just begun, and still stands as the Augustinian canons left it four hundred years ago.[6]

Yet the suppression of the monasteries by Henry VIII in England, Ireland, and Wales must be stamped for all time one of the most iniquitous episodes in the national history. The very act that suppressed the smaller houses thanks God that in the great and solemn monasteries of the realm religion was right well served. The king's commissioners were very obviously animated by other motives than reforming zeal.

The letter of the visitors to Glastonbury, dated September 22, 1539, rather naïvely illustrates their general point of view: "We assure your lordship it is the goodliest house of that sort that ever we have seen. We would that your lordship did know it as we do; then we doubt not but your lordship would judge it a house meet for the king's majesty, and for no man else. Yours to command, Richard Pollard, Thomas Moyle, Richard Layton."

Miserable fate to overtake the "city which once was the Fountain and the original of all Religion, built by Christ's disciples, consecrated by Christ Himself; and this place is the mother of Saints." [7]

Some of the monastic property was indeed well used. Six great abbeys, instead of being suppressed, were made the cathedrals of new dioceses: Westminster (which had but one bishop), Chester, Bristol, Gloucester, Peterborough, and

[6] Finchale is one of the exceedingly rare examples of a church reduced in size during the Middle Ages, and this was owing to the policy of the monks of Durham to reduce to insignificance all the dependent priories.

[7] Fuller, *Church History of Britain*, I, 98, quoting Ina's charter and other old authorities that go beyond the original legend about S. Joseph of Arimathea and the thorn.

S. Frideswide's, Oxford. Money employed for coast defence and the building of ships was at least for national purposes, but nothing can ever excuse or palliate the way in which a blackguard king granted to a set of rascally favourites, property, which devoted to education or hospitals would have been a benefit to mankind right up to the present hour.

On the Continent the path of suppression was greatly smoothed by the iniquitous system of commendatory abbots; that is, granting the headship to a man whose only interest was the pocketing of the abbatial revenues. It began as early as the sixth or seventh century and gradually increased so as to threaten to undermine the whole monastic system. In England, Wolsey was nearly the only example, and he showed great foresight in using monastic property that came under his control for the founding of his school at Ipswich, of which nothing but a gateway survives, and his college at Oxford, whose chapel is the cathedral of the diocese. The Dutch rather later used funds from the Abbey of Egmont to found the famous university of Leyden.

If many of the English monks showed themselves rather disappointingly willing to hand over their property to the king's commissioners it must always be remembered that there were stout martyrs among them who refused to do anything of the kind. The monks of the London Charterhouse showed a heroism worthy of the best traditions of their order.

Monasticism was indeed to survive the era that it had done so much in earlier centuries to create, yet despite a brilliant new period of Benedictine learning, the orders that chiefly flourished before the coming of the friars were to give place to newer forms. Their sun had not set, yet their noontide glory was past. It was to be the friars and orders entirely new that should carry on the traditions of asceticism into the life of the modern world.

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This part of the story of monasticism is of course exceedingly familiar from the writings of Froude, Pollock, and other scholars who have made the period their own. It is not specially significant from the standpoint of the present book; no one seriously supposes that the mediæval orders were making much contribution to civilization in the early sixteenth century. Among very numerous works on the monasteries at the time, or earlier, are Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum,* which is of course a mine of information on the whole subject; published originally 1655-1673, edition (8 vols.) 1817-1830, has in addition to the Latin original an account of each house in English. *The Rites of Durham,* 1593, reissued by the Surtees Society about 1845, describes the cathedral priory just before its dissolution.

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CHAPTER XVII

JESUITS AND LATER ORDERS

The Renaissance marked the triumph of materialism. It was not vulgar materialism. Quite on the contrary, it was perhaps the most cultured, æsthetic, and altogether brilliant materialism that the world has ever known.

But it was materialism nevertheless. It was concerned with building palaces rather than churches. It began to paint actual life rather than conventional Madonnas, or if it painted or sculptured prophets or saints, it did so in a most pagan way. Instead of the superb idealism of Dante, whose works may be considered a splendid epitaph of dying mediævalism, the literature of the Renaissance culminated in the throbbing life of Shakespeare's plays.

The period remade science. It discovered continents. Its humanism displayed a new interest in every side of life. Very largely it ceased to be interested in death that for so many centuries had appeared the chief concern of man. It delighted in displaying contempt for mediæval ideals.

Unfortunately it had none of its own. Machiavelli represented its ethics; Cervantes and Rabelais its general spirit; More's "Utopia" its rather impracticable cravings for a complete breach with the past. The monk-reared civilization of its fathers was voted a badly outworn thing.

By far the greater number of monasteries were suppressed, first in the British Isles, then in all the lands that accepted the Reformation, eventually in nearly all that did not. Cleared of all mere verbiage, the reason was everywhere the same; a material age imagined that it had got beyond an

outworn ideal. That in no small measure mediæval monasticism had outlived its usefulness will scarcely be seriously denied, but it has yet to be shown that the diversion of so huge an inheritance—or at least its greater part—into private hands has benefited the human race.

Despite the fact that the culture of the Renaissance was a very real thing, the destruction of monasteries was accompanied by one of the most shocking annihilations of manuscripts that the world has ever seen. It was in England but a small remnant that Archbishop Parker salvaged for the library of Corpus Christi College at Cambridge.[1]

Monasticism, it seemed very clear, was to be numbered with the enthusiasms of the past. Anything more hopelessly out of touch with the spirit of the Renaissance it would be utterly impossible to find. Humanism was the very antithesis of the old spirit of the desert. They nowhere touched at all.

And yet, in spite of everything, asceticism was once again to assert its well-nigh inextinguishable power. The Basques of Spain, a very ancient race but little known to fame, were to rear a great world leader, and from their barren hills another order rose which in the words of its German historian: "at once not only threw totally into the shade all previous monkish brotherhoods, but which accomplished more in a single century than the whole of them put together had effected during the long period of their existence." [2]

This is greatly exaggerated and seems rather to display confusion as to the work of monasticism in the history of the Church and of the world, but there is a strong substratum of truth in the remark.

[1] Notwithstanding, the bad work of dispersing monastic libraries had been begun by the religious themselves. They had for centuries ceased to be the guardians of literature that had earlier been one of their chief titles to fame.

[2] *The Jesuits, a Complete History*, by Theodore Griesinger, tr. by A. J. Scott. London, 1883. Vol. I, p. 5.

The story of S. Ignatius (1495-1556) is not very unlike that of many other monastic saints. Brave, chivalrous, popular, and true, perhaps a little fast, like all young Spaniards of that day, Charles V, Emperor and Spanish king, had no more loyal officer in his struggle with the king of France, Francis I.

Heroically assisting in the defence of Pamplona till he was disabled by wounds, he hung for many months between life and death at the family seat of Loyola. Had that feudal tower been well supplied with what was then his favourite literature, such as is now remembered chiefly in its deathless parody, the "Adventures of Don Quixote," it is possible that Ignatius would be unknown to fame. But as no tales of errant knights were to be found, he was supplied with some religious works, including particularly a life of Christ by a German Carthusian named Ludolf (p. 119).

When at last he was better, though slightly crippled for life, he had turned his thoughts to higher things. The Blessed Virgin had displaced his rather misty knightly lady love; he had found another Master than Charles V.

Despite the very slight encouragement he received from his family, he turned his steps to the cliff-perched Benedictine house of Montserrat, and in its chapel like the good knights of old he hung his arms and watched all night, vowing himself to the service of God and holy Church.

His singular career of monk-errantry had begun. Pilgrimaging to Palestine he visited with the most fervent devotion the places made sacred by the earthly footsteps of our Lord, and he planned to attempt the task of converting the Turks with no further equipment than enthusiasm; for he knew no language but his own, he was ill-versed in Christian theology, and of that of Islam he knew nothing at all.

He was somewhat coldly received by the Franciscan brothers at Jerusalem, who, dwelling on sufferance amid a fanatic people, were fearful of the result of his indiscrimi-

nate zeal. Drifting back to Spain, he had at least discovered that without education almost nothing could be done, and so at Alcalá he studied the elements of Latin. There the dashing officer of former years sat upon the same benches with little boys and begged their common master not to spare the rod on himself in any case where he would have used it on the meanest of the rest.

Efforts to do missionary work among the poor, and sometimes among the rich, got Ignatius into trouble with the Inquisition, and never did that asinine tribunal give a more singular proof of its ineptitude to the world than in its treatment of the stoutest champion that the Church should ever have. Its authorities displayed little discretion and no prophetic insight at all. He showed the most devoted submission, but eventually retreated to Salamanca. As at this seat of learning the same things happened again, Ignatius turned his back on his native land and set off on foot despite tumult and war to pursue his studies in the broader atmosphere of the capital of France.

In Paris, despite the prevalence of Calvinistic views, or perhaps very largely because of it, Ignatius found a few like-minded with himself. His studies progressed better than in Spain, but evidently his intensely religious mind, with its earnest communing with its God, found the very utmost difficulty in such concentration as alone can win honours in a university course.

On a warm summer's day, August 15, 1534, on the historic hill called Montmartre, which was then a few miles out from the fair city of Paris, in a little chapel connected with the story of S. Denis, the patron of the great abbey not far off, knelt seven men through long and pregnant hours. The Parisians were completely uninterested, yet even in such a city as their own few more momentous happenings have had place.

The only one of the little band in holy orders, Faber by

name, administered the Sacrament to all the rest. The most famous were Francis Xavier and Ignatius himself. When at length they returned to the daylight they had founded what perhaps was to prove itself the greatest monastic company that ever was, dedicated A(d) M(aiorem) D(ei) G(loriam) in the particular name of I.H.S.

After wandering to Venice in the hope of reaching Palestine, and taking up the task of converting the Turks, the little band, kept out of Asia by the unceasing wars, devoted itself to work among lepers and other outcasts in Venice; then at Rome decided to place its whole fortunes at the disposal of the Pope for such tasks as he might direct.

The Society of Jesus was fully entered upon its wonderful career.

This Company represents the climax of a tendency long evident in monastic history. Originally the object of asceticism was to save the soul of the monk—nothing else. The rule of S. Benedict contemplated no other aim. Chrodegang, of Metz, in the institution of canons, displayed a desire to utilize the efficiency of monasticism to improve the secular clergy. The friars took upon themselves definite duties towards the people, but still the main emphasis was on the living in poverty for the benefit of their own souls.

The Jesuits are frankly instituted to do a great work in the world. The emphasis is upon nothing else. The charter does not mention the salvation of the members of the order, but is keenly concerned with the work they have to do.

"Whoever will, as a soldier of God in our Company upon which we have bestowed the name of Jesus, fight under the banner of the Cross, and serve God and His representative on earth, the Pope of Rome, after having in the most solemn manner taken the vow of chastity, must always recollect that he now belongs to a Company which has been instituted simply and solely in order to perfect in the souls of men the teaching and dissemination of Christianity as also to pro-

mulgate the true faith by means of the public preaching of God's word, by holy exercises and macerations, by works of love, and especially by the education of the young."

"It shall be for the general alone, whom we shall elect, to have the right of assigning to each his grade and duties. * * * The general shall draw up a constitution, and on all important points shall convoke all the members of the society or as many as can conveniently gather in order to get their advice."

The duty of absolute obedience both to the Pope and the general is very strongly emphasized. All members of the society who are priests must say the offices privately and not in common, like monks in cloister.

The general corruption of the monastic orders was such that objections to authorizing a new one were of the strongest kind. The admirable Cardinal Guidiccioni, "the glory and honour of Lucca," was very emphatic on this point and for some time he would not even read the papers connected with the Jesuits.

Pope Paul III was of quite a different opinion and on reading the proposed charter he is alleged to have exclaimed: "The finger of God is here!" Eventually all objections were overcome; the needs of the Church were obviously great. The new monastic order seemed likely to dash into an ever-broadening gap.

So on September 27, 1540, the charter was incorporated into a bull, and immunities of the widest kind were conferred upon the Company of Jesus. The rights of bishops and even of universities were largely subordinated to its privileges.

The aim of the society was very largely to stem the currents of the age and to counteract the forces of the Renaissance. A fine beginning was made in the work immediately undertaken among the prostitutes and other unfortunates of Rome. In one respect the spirit of the age was very fully

recognized. The organization was made autocratic and military. The democracy of the older orders was cast aside. No chapter house was needed in a Jesuit convent. The constitution itself was promulgated by the general in 1552, without any ratification from the members. Unlike the earlier charter, it speaks of the "salvation of our own souls," but this is not prominent.

It is impossible not to feel that in the story of the Company of Jesus we are treading on new soil. Egypt is left behind and that for the first time. In the society of most founders of orders and particularly the most prominent, such as Benedict and Francis of Assisi, the desert monk would have felt very perfectly at home. With their great ideals he could not but sympathize; in their language he would have recognized his own. The general atmosphere of monasticism, despite the strong side-winds of the Roman spirit and of feudalism, persists from Paul to Thomas à Kempis, and indeed beyond.

But what could the desert hermit make of a monastic legislator whose motto, inscribed beneath his statue in the Gesù at Rome, was: "I came to set fire to the earth and how can I be content until it has burst into flame?" [3] The words might fittingly indeed have been engraved upon a monument to Napoleon or Cæsar, but to a solitary of the Thebaid they would have seemed the furthest possible remove from anything he ought to want to do. Monasticism has travelled very far from the days when of S. Benedict it could be said: "He looked at the world and he scorned it." [4]

And in the whole literature of Jesuitism we are conscious that monasticism is speaking in terms completely new. What else indeed would be possible in the era during which it was born? What conceivable contact could the Renaissance have

[3] "*Ignem veni mettere in terram, et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?*"
[4] "*Inspexit et despexit*," carved on the old Roman tower at Monte Cassino.

had with the renunciation of the world? Even S. Ignatius could not get away from the spirit of his age, much as he found in it to condemn.

His character indeed is singularly complex. On one side is a complete mediævalism, facing the past in the spirit of a dreamy mystic; on the other the most practical man of a practical age, the only one who really saw on what lines the Church's power might be restored. History knows no stronger combination than that of the seer and the practical statesman combined. Columbus was another such in Loyola's own age. And Ignatius would never dissipate his energy. He cared no more than Luther for all the culture of the Renaissance. Before Pamplona the keenest of soldiers; afterwards the keenest and most practical of monks.[5]

A first-rate scholar he was not. Though he lived in Rome he never mastered the Italian language and mixed it with Spanish words. None of his ideas was particularly new. Yet he stands forth one of the great geniuses of all history, and no one ever succeeded more completely in the work to which he put his hand. He may be said to have brought military efficiency to the service of religion, and from his own personality and the fervent spirit he was able to instil into his followers, he probably improved upon the military organization of that day.

He invariably worked with constituted authority, never in opposition to it. He once told his secretary, Polanco, whose writings are a chief authority for early Jesuit history, that in recruits he looked for business ability and firmness of character rather than for purely natural goodness.

Yet Ignatius himself was a man of prayer as much as any of the saints of old, and on one occasion, when disturbed at

[5] Technically, of course, Jesuits are clerks regular, but monk is being used more and more for religious of any kind. Even Franciscans and Dominicans use the term of themselves, but most inaccurately.

his devotions by a messenger bearing a budget of letters from his family, he ordered the whole lot to be tossed into the fire unread (p. 33). He very fully realized the absolute necessity of restoring to the hearts of individuals the unquestioning faith of mediæval years.

Ignatius stands forth in history the very incarnation of the organizing spirit of Rome, no less so from his non-Roman birth. Pagan or Christian, Rome has ever known how to use men of every race. First in the domain of general culture, and later on of faith, Latin civilization had but little contribution for the general store of men; in both cases it was mainly the Greeks by whom such original inspirations were supplied.

But Rome used the conceptions that she found elsewhere; she made them the common property of the then known world; she took her own place as the summit, the organizing spirit, the directing force of all. So Ignatius identified the interests of his company with those of the Latin Church with all its imperial traditions. He could do no otherwise. He would take no other capital than Rome.

He had no need to mould a faith, but he built up one of the most efficient organizing forces that the world has ever known. Sprung from a little people, he knew no limitations of nation, clime or race. The great society he built has never been influenced by any local bonds; has never claimed any allegiance narrower than that of the world. He is one of the chiefest in the long line of statesmen who have refurbished the time-honoured methods of Rome. The empire of Augustus and Charles the Great he reared anew, but in far other form.

He stands the only genius of the foremost rank upon the Papal side during the storms of the Renaissance. Had he not lived, it is quite possible that no other would have done his work. He infused new life into what had seemed like dying mediævalism. His enduring monument in large de-

gree is the modern Church of Rome. It is not a faith apt to lack champions in all days of stress and strain.

The confidence of successive Popes in his great society has been abundantly justified. It may well be doubted if in the whole course of history any other society has so entirely, so brilliantly, and so triumphantly carried out the designs of its founder. In restoring the prestige and the power of the Papacy since the shattering blows dealt by the Reformation, no other force has taken anything approaching the same part. Extraordinary influence has been gained over the politics of every land from Portugal to Poland.

No mediæval order ever had anything like such long continued power. Vast areas of Europe have been won back to the fold of the Church of Rome, particularly within the limits of the old dual monarchy. Great numbers of heathen have been converted. New altars have been reared under every sky. A great educational work has been carried out. A striking form of Renaissance architecture has been fostered.

There have been times when the general at Rome has been one of the most powerful men on earth, largely controlling the policy of many great European states, ruling in sovereignty a vast South American dominion (p. 185), directing a world-wide commerce and also a mission and educational work that seem vast even according to the standards of the America of the present day. The methods of the society indeed have at times perhaps resembled those of the wily Ulysses.

The company has indeed aroused antagonisms of the fiercest kind both within and without the Church, nor would any deny that at times its morality has been influenced by the standards of the Renaissance, but the often repeated charge that Jesuitism justifies any methods to achieve its ends seems to rest, so far as documentary evidence is con-

cerned, merely upon a single passage of a by no means prominent member.[6]

It has been said and frequently repeated that in its iron discipline the company of Jesus has bred no first-class mind since its very earliest days. This seems certainly rather to ignore the heroic missionaries and explorers who first seriously began the task of introducing the Far East to the West, of taming the American wilds and exploring no insignificant portion of Africa. But there has been a strong tendency for some of the very greatest minds that the society ever trained to break away in various directions, such as Descartes, Voltaire, Pascal.

In 1773 the society was suppressed by Clement XIV, as the result of a widespread demand from many of the Roman Catholic countries of Europe, whose objection was directed chiefly to its political activities. Only in Protestant Prussia and Orthodox Russia could any refuge be found and the motives of Frederick the Great and Catherine II were certainly not sympathy with the religious doctrines of the exiled fathers.[7]

In the first decade of the nineteenth century the society was restored, largely owing to the alarm felt at the spread of liberal principles and the feeling that no organization was better fitted to cope with the movement. Again it spread its churches and missions throughout the world, and planted many colleges in all parts of the United States.

The Company of Jesus has played a part in Europe hardly

[6] Busembaum, *"Cui licitus est finis etiam licent media,"* Paris, 1729, p. 584; or Lib. VI. Tract vi., cap. ii., *De sacramentis, dubium ii.* The by no means impressive instances of a lack of candour in the founder himself are treated with great care by his most recent biographer, H. D. Sedgwick.

[7] The details of the political activities of the Jesuits in the different countries seem hardly in place in such a work as the present. Portugal provided in John III, their first royal patron, and later in Pombal their arch-enemy. Bohemia was probably the European country in which they achieved their most permanent success.

inferior in importance to that of the monks of old, but there is this most important difference. Instead of helping to rebuild a secular civilization destroyed by the collapse of a régime, it has chiefly sought to influence in the interests of its own Church the institutions that it found in possession. No one has ever claimed that the society has done during the period of the Renaissance what Benedictinism so gloriously achieved during the early Middle Ages. Society was no longer so plastic as might have made possible anything of the kind.

Although by far the most important, the Jesuits were by no means the only religious order that arose in the sixteenth century. The Theatrines, founded by Gaetano di Thiene and Pietro Caraffa, were instituted with a very similar ideal. The members were to live on what was voluntarily offered them without even begging, and to set such an example of deep spirituality to the secular clergy as to raise the whole tone of the Church.

Caraffa showed the spirit of a saint—or as some might prefer to put it, of a true sportsman—when as Paul IV, he gave the strongest support to the Jesuits, though at one time he had probably hoped to enlist Ignatius as a member of his own order. Other orders founded during the sixteenth century include the Barnabites by S. A. M. Zaccaria, the Brothers Hospitallers by S. John of God, and the better known Oratorians, an order established by S. Philip Neri, which in 1847 was introduced into England by Newman.

Nothing can better illustrate the master mind of S. Ignatius than the fact that his own company dominates all the rest as a forest oak overshadows the woodland flowers, and this despite the fact that the founder of the Theatrines became the sovereign Pontiff.

The religious revival under Archbishop Laud and others during the early part of the seventeenth century re-intro-

duced monasticism into the English Church, but this did not survive the civil war.[8]

Since the Oxford Movement, a number of new Anglican orders, English and American, both for monks and nuns, have been called into being.[9] Like the very numerous new orders in the Church of Rome, all are designed to carry on some special task, such as preaching, teaching, nursing, embroidery, or mission work. Even today monastic ideals are far from being outworn, but they only slightly concern a study of the influence asceticism has exerted on the general story of mankind.

In the fifth century European civilization was prostrated under the rude shock of endless, futile war. Monks built it up anew. In the twentieth century the condition of Europe is not so very different. What force can do such work today as monks so well did then? The monk at least can teach us this. All work that shall ever bear the test of time must be founded, not on hatred but on love. The days when monks could rule the world are numbered with the well remembered bygone years. But the spirit of Basil and Benedict, Bernard and Francis of Assisi is a heritage that we cannot afford to let die. Even if we did, our children would find it again. For of each great monk, as of Shakespeare, it is true:

"He was not of an age, but for all time."

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[8] A later convent was sponsored by Bishop Ken of Bath and Wells in the later seventeenth century.

[9] In Fr. Figgis, of Cambridge, Anglican monasticism has produced a mediæval scholar of the first rank.

(Macmillan). This is an exceedingly satisfactory piece of work.

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